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President: Mr. Errázuriz (Vice-President) ..... (Chile)

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In the absence of Mr. Ali (Malaysia), Mr. Errázuriz (Chile), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Special economic, humanitarian and disaster relief assistance (*continued*) (E/2010/88-A/65/82)

Panel discussion

1. **The President** invited the Council to hold a panel discussion on "Strengthening preparedness for humanitarian emergencies and the coordinated provision of humanitarian assistance, in particular, addressing the humanitarian needs of the affected populations and the factors that increase susceptibility to humanitarian emergencies". He said that the choice of topic bore testimony to how global challenges were exacerbating the vulnerability of communities and how humanitarian needs should be addressed in contexts not necessarily labelled as humanitarian crises.

2. **Mr. Holmes** (Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator), moderator, said that the humanitarian landscape was being shaped by profound and global challenges which included climate change, the food crisis, population growth, urbanization, scarcities of key resources such as land, water and energy, disturbances to ecosystems, the emergence of pandemics and the impact of the economic and financial crisis on the most vulnerable. Those challenges would constitute greater humanitarian burdens, often in unfamiliar developmental contexts, and would lead to chronic and acute vulnerability and needs on a scale that could not easily be imagined.

3. Existing vulnerabilities would become more severe, humanitarian caseloads would include unfamiliar groups, especially among such beneficiaries as the urban poor, and needs that coexisted with chronic underdevelopment would have to be identified. A new model would be required, not driven by shocks, events and triggers, that could identify tipping points and humanitarian needs in the absence of obvious causes. In the future there would be combined, multisectoral trends leading to new forms of vulnerabilities and needs.

4. A clearer approach was needed, with system-wide, multi-hazard indicators to facilitate better decisions. Better monitoring systems were needed to capture how the global trends were coming together and how they were increasing vulnerabilities. An overall system was needed that would focus not only on response but also on disaster reduction and prevention and, eventually, on exit strategies. To achieve that, there had to be better coordination with development partners in Governments and civil society to raise capacity and to analyse the trends in order to identify their effects on populations at risk.

5. Identifying humanitarian needs in what traditionally had been seen as development contexts was a sensitive matter: Governments were concerned by their image and their ability to attract investment and those sensitivities must be understood, just as it must be understood that humanitarian needs could arise anywhere. Work must be coordinated with Governments to develop responses that were both humanitarian and developmental in nature.

6. **Ms. Shaban** (Kenya), Minister of State for Special Programmes, said that the three main areas to be addressed were preparedness, coordination of humanitarian assistance, and post-emergency efforts, and that they must be studied together in order to tackle them and to understand how to enable people to return to normal lives. In all disasters, it was important for all stakeholders to be involved and for the Government to lead and coordinate to prevent duplication and to ensure accountability. In the case of the post-election violence in Kenya, there had been close coordination between the Government, United Nations agencies and civil-society organizations, with daily meetings and the immediate implementation of outcomes.

7. Situations before, during and after emergencies had to be studied together. Kenya had suffered several disasters, with economic, political and social impacts. The most severe ones had been caused by droughts, crop failures and floods, and their effects had been exacerbated by the presence of many refugees in the country. Those people brought their animals with them, overstretching pasture and leading to conflicts over land use.

8. Strengthening preparedness was not always easy. However, disasters related to climate were recurrent and as weather patterns became less predictable, they would have greater adverse effects. Climate change had resulted in abnormal conditions as shown by the drought and floods over the previous 12 months in

Kenya. Better disaster preparedness required more accurate prediction, a luxury Kenya did not have. There must be stronger early-warning mechanisms, particularly for droughts, because Kenya relied on rain-fed agriculture and suffered from fluctuations in commodity prices and hunger. To mitigate the adverse effects of climate-related emergencies, grain reserves had been expanded and improvements had been made to irrigation systems to improve food security. The population had been sensitized to the need to keep reserves ready, even after bumper harvests. The Government had built dams to retain water after flooding. Efforts had been made to reduce conflict among pastoral communities by reducing the distances travelled to water animals and by investing in agricultural diversification. People had been persuaded to move away from rivers and low-lying areas to avoid the risk of floods. Transport, communication and storage infrastructure had been improved.

9. Preparedness, prevention and contingency planning were critical for timely and effective responses and to build people's resilience to withstand emergencies. People were susceptible to humanitarian emergencies because of drought, poverty and underdevelopment, and poor food-productivity levels. The lack of market for local produce meant that there was little incentive to produce more, and everybody was growing the same crop at the same time.

10. There had been a lack of institutions to coordinate humanitarian assistance. After the fragmented response to the 1998 bomb attacks, the Ministry of State for Special Programmes had been created to coordinate the response of ministries, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and communities. Efforts were coordinated at the local level, concentrating on disaster management, and seminars were held for local populations. Stronger relationships had been built with the United Nations, NGOs and the Red Cross.

11. The country had disaster-preparedness plans in place but needed better coordination. Unfortunately, the response to rains and droughts, where assessments were carried out with the World Food Programme and other actors, had been complicated because, as a result of climate change, normal flood patterns were not being followed. Access to resources had been a great obstacle. The Central Emergency Response Fund's efforts were welcome, but there must be adequate, flexible and sustainable resources during all phases of emergencies.

12. The Government of Kenya had worked to address the needs of affected populations during humanitarian disasters. It worked to establish priorities among food, water, shelter and security, and to create a semblance of normalcy by ensuring education for children through mobile schools. The Government bought livestock from pastoralists in dry years to sell for meat and transported water in tankers to follow communities and their animals. It repaired roads washed away by floods. Humanitarian assistance was provided by military personnel, aided by the National Youth Service and the police.

13. The standard of living of women and youth had been improved through an enterprise fund to promote entrepreneurship. Information on missing persons was continually provided through the media in the form of daily and weekly bulletins. To reduce susceptibility to disasters, drought-resistant cattle were being introduced. Diversification into other economic activities was being encouraged, especially in arid areas, with World Bank support.

14. Kenya was working to upgrade its coffee-research institute and extension services. It was working in water, reforestation and environmental-impact assessments. Various authorities had been sensitized to the humanitarian aspects of their work and training had been given in communities to ensure there were grass-roots first responders to disasters.

15. Numerous legal steps had been taken to prevent a repetition of the post-electoral violence of 2007. They included the creation of a new and independent electoral commission and a boundaries commission, and the adoption of policies on land and internally displaced persons.

16. **Mr. Jha** (Manager and Head, Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR), World Bank), accompanying his presentation with computerized files, said that reducing the risk of humanitarian emergencies was crucial for sustainable development, and poverty was extremely vulnerable to external shocks. A 2005 study on natural-disaster hotspots conducted by the World Bank, Columbia University and several other partners had revealed that 75 per cent of disaster hotspots in the world were populated by persons living in moderate and extreme

poverty, and one third of the world's poor lived in those hotspots.

17. In addressing development, it was important to look at how the vulnerability of poor people to external shocks, including natural hazards, was managed, as the human and economic consequences were often massive. The economic impact of both the Samoa tsunami of 2009 and the Haiti earthquake of 2010, for example, had been 120 per cent of each country's gross domestic product. Moreover, according to the World Bank, the average loss of employment worldwide due to natural disasters was about 4 to 5 per cent each year, and the earthquake in Haiti had caused job losses at an estimated 8.5 per cent. If vulnerabilities were not managed as part of development planning, such disasters would continue to have a devastating impact on vulnerable communities.

18. In order to be better prepared to address emergency situations in the future, development and humanitarian actors needed to bear in mind that poverty estimates for countries tended to be static, without factoring in changing conditions or uncertain events to which people were exposed. The actual percentage of people below the poverty line was much higher than it seemed. It would thus be useful to analyse how certain events might affect a given country's poverty outcomes, as it was found, for example, that many countries prone to earthquakes of a magnitude of 6 or above on the Richter scale were unlikely to achieve their poverty-reduction or national development goals in a five-year planning cycle.

19. Thus, growth and poverty alleviation could only be sustainable if vulnerabilities and risk management were taken into account in national-development and poverty-reduction strategies as well as in reconstruction efforts. The philosophy of "building back better" should instead follow the notion of "building better in the first place", as it was crucial to move from a shock-driven to a needs-based approach. In that respect, it was encouraging that an increasing number of Governments had been requesting funding for preparedness and prevention.

20. He provided an overview of the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery, which had been established at a 2006 meeting with donors, United Nations agencies and the World Bank as a multi-donor programme to provide technical and financial assistance to countries in need, and to look at a few priority disaster-hotspot countries. The goal was to demonstrate change in 20 countries over the coming three to four years. The Facility's efforts included getting the issues of risk-reduction and recovery into policy discussions in connection with disaster-prone countries, conducting post-disaster needs assessments and looking at the cost-benefit element of disaster-risk reduction. In cases where only a small amount of funding was available for prevention, priority should be given to setting up an early-warning system, which was emerging as the most economical disaster-risk-reduction action. The Facility aimed to include risk reduction as an integral component in poverty-reduction strategies. It also aimed to influence the World Bank's investment structure with a view to "disaster-proofing" investments in the relevant countries. In that respect, it was encouraging to note that an increasing number of countries had been including risk reduction in their national strategies.

21. **Ms. Mahmood** (Chief, Humanitarian Response Branch, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)) said that to predict, identify and respond to acute humanitarian needs, it was crucial to look at data, needs and demography on the one hand and communication on the other. On the first aspect, she noted that access to good data was a component of good governance, transparency and accountability, and population data helped leaders and policymakers to make informed decisions. Good data was also needed in order to respond to humanitarian crises, and demographic patterns could serve as triggers to alert Governments and development and humanitarian actors.

22. Various demographic factors increased susceptibility to humanitarian emergencies. For example, high population density and sustained high growth in areas where natural resources were scarce could lead to displacement and conflict; high rural-urban migration to areas with scarce jobs and social services could lead to increased levels of congestion and crime; unequal spatial population distribution in areas at risk of natural disasters was problematic. Moreover, countries where most of the rural population was dependent on rain-fed subsistence agriculture and animal breeding could be vulnerable during prolonged periods of drought, unleash waves of migration to other parts of the country and provoke conflict relating to land and ethnicity.

23. Sex- and age-disaggregated data was useful in helping to ensure the needs of women, young people and the elderly, especially after a disaster. The elderly were one of the most vulnerable groups in the crisis in Haiti, for example, yet little had been heard about their special needs. Also, the scarcity and unreliability of data on internally displaced persons was a key impediment to the response to that crisis.

24. Development and humanitarian actors needed to engage with developmental agencies, such as the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), which had expertise and worked closely with national authorities, and had held the only remaining database containing sex- and age-disaggregated data after the earthquake in Haiti. UNFPA had drawn up Guidelines on Data Issues in Humanitarian Crisis Situations to help replicate that experience and strengthen national capacities, including through a "training of trainers" approach.

25. Post-disaster communication was the second area that required attention, and had been a major gap in aid agencies' strategies for too long. Without access to information — knowing whether a loved one was safe or where to go for water — disaster survivors could not begin to make the right choices for themselves and their families. Better communication was also needed to reach out to marginalized communities such as indigenous populations, as survivors often did not know their rights. In such contexts, radio, the Internet and mobile telephones, the growth of which was faster in the developing than in the developed world, were important vehicles.

26. Likewise, humanitarian agencies needed feedback from beneficiaries so that response could be improved. The response to the earthquake in Haiti had provided a glimpse of the future of disaster response and of communications environments, where even the poorest and most isolated people could connect to millions through the phone in their pocket. Real-time communication channels could revolutionize the way humanitarian agencies did business and address some long-term vulnerabilities, and could be a true melding of business and the humanitarian and development communities.

27. Rather than allow new and emerging technologies to shore up existing communications systems, it was time to think about establishing a two-way flow of information; the establishment of the Inter-Agency Working Group on Communicating with Disaster Affected Communities (CDAC) was a first step in that direction. However, much more was needed, including engagement, debate, the establishment of a modus operandi and means to regulate the way in which the aid community used technology. Technologies and tools needed not only to be relevant to the response-based humanitarian system already in place, but also to be focused on national and regional authorities as the first line of preparedness, which should emphasize prevention and risk reduction at least as much as response. New partnerships must be created among public authorities, civil society and business, focusing on building resilience at every level, to reduce the risks of natural hazards.

28. The information-technology community was willing and able to work with aid agencies, including Ushahidi and Crisis Commons. The interaction between the technology companies and aid agencies needed to be visionary, reliable, predictable, principled and cognizant of humanitarian principles, and jointly focused on achieving true change in the way business was conducted; otherwise, humanitarian agencies would be left behind. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) needed to take a lead in that regard, and needed the resources to be able to do so.

29. **Mr. Walker** (Irwin H. Rosenberg Professor of Nutrition and Human Security and Director, Feinstein International Center, Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy, Tufts University) said that, while there was a great deal of financial data available with regard to humanitarian assistance, aggregated data on how many people humanitarian systems sought to assist were woefully inadequate. It was also unclear if those targeted by humanitarian-assistance programmes represented a large or a small percentage of the total number of people requiring assistance. Without such information, humanitarian-assistance systems became driven by financial data and not by human data. Moreover, it was estimated that there were approximately 500,000 aid workers worldwide, of whom 210,000 worked in the humanitarian business. However those figures were little more than guesswork based on the financial data available. Without data on how many people were working in the system and how long they had been working there, it was impossible to know if they needed training or if they were effective.

30. The nature of disasters was changing. Most responses to crises focused on meeting people's needs.

However, such needs were often confused with the losses suffered by people in crises. Furthermore, since crises were becoming more chronic in nature, greater focus needed to be placed on addressing people's hopes for the future once those needs to survive had been met. Better data was needed to accurately assess the hopes and aspirations of people affected by crises in order to help them recover and build a better future for themselves.

31. If the humanitarian-assistance field was to become more data driven and nuanced, greater professionalism was required. In a recent survey of people working in that field, 80 per cent of those questioned said that the system needed to become more professional. They believed that skills required by professional humanitarian workers included the ability to multitask, to build teams and to make decisions based on minimal information in a rapidly changing environment. Moreover, key values such as impartiality and independence as well as hands-on experience were all vital.

32. It was hoped that, based on improved data, a type of global humanitarian association could be established. That association would certify individuals' competences as humanitarian workers within the framework of a universally recognized system and would deliver training worldwide. That would serve the humanitarian community and facilitate the delivery of independent effective and accountable aid. The humanitarian community was much broader than some imagined and many diverse organizations were involved in dealing with crises. Those included, inter alia, local community-based organizations and municipalities, mega-churches, Islamic organizations and organizations collecting remittances from abroad. In order to estimate how many people were involved in humanitarian work, better data collection was essential.

33. There was no longer a sharp distinction between development and relief work since many crises were chronic in nature. Over 40 per cent of humanitarian assistance was spent on programmes which had been ongoing for over eight years and that figure had been growing. People targeted by such programmes were kept in a situation where they were neither just surviving, nor had the opportunity to move forward. Such people included many internally displaced persons and refugees, pastoralists and families in shanty towns who did not receive remittances. Whether some Haitians would face a similar situation in five years' time remained to be seen. Greater professionalism was required so that the humanitarian system was fit for the purpose. It should aim not only to keep people alive but allow them the opportunity to "build back better" and move on to sustainable livelihoods.

34. **Mr. Thomas** (Director, Emergency Operations and Rehabilitation Division, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)) said that, according to recent global trends, those working in the humanitarian field needed to be better prepared for humanitarian crises, to work harder to prevent such crises from occurring and, if they did occur, to safeguard and restore survivors' means of survival. It was possible to predict most humanitarian crises and emergencies and their impact on vulnerable populations. Moreover, many crises were chronic in nature; recent data collected by FAO had revealed that over half of the 23 countries facing chronic food crises had been doing so for over 10 years. The severity of humanitarian crises depended on the vulnerability of populations and systems before shocks occurred and on their resilience to absorb such shocks. That was particularly true of food insecurity, which often resulted from humanitarian crises. However, food riots in 2008 had shown that food insecurity could also give rise to such crises.

35. Extreme vulnerability was a potential source of destabilization and a threat to peace and security. Responses to crises needed to be substantial, immediate and sustainable; must better integrate preparedness, warning systems, vulnerability assessments, prevention and transitional measures; and must integrate risk and disaster-management concepts. Responses must aim not only to save lives but also to restore livelihoods and address root causes, thus strengthening populations' resilience and helping them develop their own survival strategies. Furthermore, it was important to build Member States' capacities to respond to humanitarian crises. In that connection, the approach of the Kenyan Government was to be commended.

36. Approximately 45 per cent of the population of the Horn of Africa continued to live in abject poverty. Increased vulnerability as a result of recurrent crises and population growth had given rise to chronic food insecurity. A similar crisis was unfolding in Niger, Chad, Mali, Burkino Faso and northern Nigeria. In June 2010, an annual survey by the Nigerian

Government had revealed that 16.7 per cent of Nigerian children under five were suffering from acute malnutrition; any figure over 15 per cent was considered an emergency. Meanwhile, 2 million people in Chad had been affected by the food crisis and 1 million faced severe food insecurity. At the same time, farmers and pastoralists across the region were competing more fiercely for access to resources and land.

37. In Haiti, in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture, FAO had assisted small-scale farmers in testing and distributing a new variety of black bean which reached maturity faster and required less water and consequently reduced risk for farmers. Such an approach was being replicated by FAO and its partners in storm-prone areas such as the Caribbean and drought-prone areas such as the Sahel and the Horn of Africa, where FAO was working with national and regional partners to improve pastoralists' resilience by, inter alia, improving water harvests and providing access to veterinary services and microcredit. Efforts by Governments in East Africa to increase investment in agriculture needed to be supported. Furthermore, FAO was working with communities in the Niger to rehabilitate pastoral land and facilitate access to agricultural inputs and credit by establishing village cooperatives. In the Sahel region, there was now an effective regional alert system and, within the framework of the European Union Food Facility, FAO was working with national research institutions in Burkino Faso and the Niger to develop and disseminate drought-resistant short-cycle seeds and high-yield crops.

38. Preventing crises from occurring was also vital. In 2008 and 2009, locusts had threatened the livelihoods of 15 million people in parts of Africa. However, effective early-warning systems had ensured that affected areas had been treated, crops saved and a humanitarian catastrophe averted. Madagascar's food security was also threatened by locusts. To avert disaster, 500,000 square kilometres of crops needed to be treated. Modest resources committed now would prevent the loss of hundreds of millions of dollars of production later and would avert a major food crisis.

39. Emergency strategies built around preparation and disaster-risk management were an integral part of the new strategic framework of FAO. Emergency responses alone were insufficient. Chronic vulnerability and the impact of multiple hazards on the lives of people needed to be assessed and the underlying factors which contributed to crises needed to be addressed at the same time and with the same urgency as vital short-term needs. Coherent strategies with financial partners were also of great importance and links needed to be established between budgetary lines and those working on emergency and development issues.

40. **Mr. Laroche** (Assistant Director-General, Health Action in Crises, World Health Organization (WHO)) said that the first responders in an emergency were always local people. After floods had occurred in Myanmar, data revealed that 95 per cent of the health-related response had been by local communities. Moreover, although communicable diseases were often considered paramount, data showed that non-communicable and chronic diseases represented 80 per cent of the health-related burden in low- and middle-income countries. Responses and actions needed to be more data-driven. However a meta-analysis by the WHO Health and Nutrition Tracking Service revealed that only 30 per cent of all nutrition surveys carried out over the previous 10 years had been accurate. Moreover, only 1 per cent of maternal-mortality studies in emergency situations were valid. Such low rates were due not only to inadequate training but also to the difficulty of gathering accurate data. If good data was collected, there was need for an appropriate response and for funding to address identified needs. A 1992 study had revealed that a region in Afghanistan had the highest ever recorded rates of maternal mortality. However, three years later no funding had yet been provided for maternal-mortality programmes.

41. In 2007, WHO had carried out a global assessment of preparedness and response among all the agencies involved in health. That assessment had revealed that, although half of all States had faced at least one major disaster in the previous five years, less than 50 per cent of States had earmarked a budget for preparedness and response. Appropriate structures were also required in order to ensure that an adequate response could be implemented. Preparation would remain difficult if so few countries had an appropriate budget for responses. However, preparedness by low- and middle-income countries was possible. In Bangladesh in 1971, half a million people had died as a result of floods. Bangladesh had strengthened its preparedness by, inter alia, establishing one of the best

cholera hospitals in the world, and floods now resulted in far fewer deaths. It was necessary to stop seeing people as problems. Instead they were the key to solving their problems.

42. In China, health responses had been very impressive: according to the Chinese Minister of Health, during the response to the Sichuan earthquake, China had used systems developed during that country's severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) crisis, thus demonstrating that preparedness was strongly linked to establishing adequate structures and systems and was not hazard-specific. Similarly, following the 1985 earthquake, Mexico had developed a matrix to assess vulnerability, set budget priorities and evaluate the safety of hospitals. In an emergency, it was vital that hospitals were structurally sound and had the capacity to deal with a huge surge of illness and injuries. In that regard, WHO, in collaboration with other United Nations agencies and the International Federation of the Red Cross, had implemented the Safe Hospital Initiative.

43. The nature of emergency responses was also changing: clusters had been established and a thematic platform for health had been drawn up in order to bring together those active in the health field, as well as engineers, planners, municipality actors, policymakers and architects, with a view to addressing health-related issues and strengthening capacities. Collaborative efforts were needed to ensure that all stakeholders, including, governmental institutions, community-based NGOs and the United Nations system worked effectively together. When a comprehensive action plan on malnutrition was drawn up for a State, the United Nations Development Action Framework should be revised with a view to addressing the root causes of problems. In that regard, WHO issued a risk-analysis framework for every State so that stakeholders knew what needed to be done and what was not required.

44. Although the recent events in Haiti had mobilized the capacity and the compassion of the world, humanitarian efforts there had suffered from inadequate coordination due to the huge number of agencies involved. There had been 384 agencies working in the health field alone. It was not possible to meet people's needs without involving the most skilled and experienced actors in the humanitarian emergency field; without the necessary skills and back up, humanitarian workers could cause more harm than good.

Question-and-answer session

45. **Mr. Bonser** (Canada) said that the private sector represented an untapped resource from a humanitarian perspective, particularly in the area of communications technology. The international community therefore needed to consider how better to share best practices in the development of private-sector partnerships. Canada's experience was that the private sector had been very willing to offer help following the earthquakes in Haiti and Chile but had not known how to become involved. Since it was too late to make the initial contacts at a time of crisis, relationships needed to be established much earlier.

46. Secondly, while data collection was indeed often inadequate, the report of the Secretary-General (E/2010/88-A/65/82) contained some good examples of monitoring, mapping and data collection, including the OCHA Global Focus Model and the Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping unit of the World Food Programme (WFP). He would like to know the extent to which good data analysis was systematically shared among agencies, both within and outside the United Nations system, and the extent to which such data was shared with host Governments, especially in natural-disaster settings.

47. **Ms. Lee** Sorie (Republic of Korea) said that she concurred with the comments made by the representative of Canada. In view of the vicious circle of natural disasters and poverty, as well as the importance of incorporating a long-term development perspective in the response to humanitarian emergencies, it was important to forge closer links between disaster-risk reduction and development efforts. In that connection, her delegation believed that more tangible partnerships should be developed among various actors, including the private sector. Better collaboration had already been achieved among the United Nations system, Governments and NGOs, but the humanitarian community needed to work on building such partnerships with more development-oriented organizations; she would like to know how the panellists thought that could be achieved.

48. **Mr. Lallemand-Zeller** (Observer for the European Union) asked what the role of humanitarian actors would be in responding to the cyclical or slower-onset crises that seemed likely to emerge in the future; what, for example, was the relationship between humanitarian action and social safety nets? Secondly,

as humanitarian action became more closely linked with long-term development approaches, he wondered whether humanitarian actors needed to take additional methods or principles into account. Thirdly, he would be interested to know whether the panellists considered that future trends in humanitarian action would have consequences for the current humanitarian architecture, built around national authorities, the United Nations, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs. Lastly, he would like to know what progress had been made on the new Global Impact and Vulnerability Alert System (GIVAS) and whether it was already delivering information that could be of operational assistance to decision-makers when tracking vulnerabilities.

49. **Ms. Mahmood** (Chief, Humanitarian Response Branch, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)) said that the corporate sector had been directly involved in emergency response in a number of countries, including Myanmar, and many United Nations agencies were already working in partnership with private companies; however, it was certainly important to find a platform for sharing best practices in that regard. The outcome of a two-year programme being conducted by the Inter-Agency Working Group on Communicating with Disaster Affected Communities (CDAC) in Haiti, with funding from the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID), to examine such partnerships and how they could be expanded, would provide further useful information. UNDP was also studying the role of the corporate sector in recovery and development. All the available information now needed to be brought together in order to determine how to move forward.

50. **Mr. Holmes** (Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator), moderator, said that the humanitarian community, in developing partnerships with the private sector, also needed to invest time and money since such partnerships could not be built without resources and long-term commitment.

51. **Mr. Thomas** (Director, Emergency Operations and Rehabilitation Division, FAO) said that there were many examples of good practice in the area of data collection. Two such examples were the crop and food supply assessment missions carried out jointly by FAO and WFP using data from both GIVAS and the Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping unit of WFP; and the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, which provided a real-time assessment of population vulnerabilities in different subregions of a given country. It was important now to consolidate the various systems and improve the sharing of information between them.

52. **Mr. Jha** (Manager and Head, Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR), World Bank), noting that the traditional means of collecting, storing and analysing data were no longer sufficient, said that greater use should be made of geospatial information systems, as well as satellite and space-based applications. Open-source data systems would also become increasingly important; open street mapping had, for example, been used following the earthquake in Haiti.

53. With regard to collaboration between humanitarian and development actors, the case for disaster-risk reduction to be part of development action was largely being made by humanitarian actors. Although the engagement of many United Nations development agencies and multilateral development banks had increased over the past two years, that concept was not yet fully mainstreamed in the development community. The distinction between humanitarian and development action disappeared, however, at the Government level, since both longer-term development issues and shorter-term humanitarian responses were taken into account in country-planning processes. At the international level, it would be preferable if the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) served as the platform for discussion on the issue among the various actors; at the donor level, GFDRR should fulfil that function.

54. **Mr. Walker** (Irwin H. Rosenberg Professor of Nutrition and Human Security and Director, Feinstein International Center, Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy, Tufts University) said it was more important to ensure that the humanitarian system was moving in the right direction than to define the exact connections between the various agencies. In that regard, the humanitarian architecture should be seen as an open system that welcomed new actors; it should engage in continuous dialogue about its purpose, so as to clarify which components should be incorporated; it should establish and improve mechanisms for measuring and ensuring the quality of its work; and it should make greater use of open-source types of

information, which were breaking down the barriers between assisting and assisted populations.

55. **Mr. Holmes** (Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator), moderator, said that he saw a difference between the architecture at the global level — which was very humanitarian-focused, owing to the predominance of humanitarian actors — and the humanitarian country teams at the local level, where the involvement of Governments and donors resulted in a somewhat wider and more open community.

56. **Ms. Shaban** (Kenya, Minister of State for Special Programmes) said that time was often wasted in emergency situations as the various humanitarian actors struggled to reach agreement on how to work together and competed to assume a leading role. Where a Government was in place, it should therefore take the lead in coordinating the humanitarian response, while the various agencies should work together as a team with common goals, sharing information on a daily basis. Kenya had created systems and institutions to prepare for emergencies, and was able to move quickly in response even to minor situations. It had also established a food-security group that met biannually, or more frequently if required.

57. Communication was a very important part of the humanitarian response. Mobile telephony offered considerable advantages and, in Kenya, the M-PESA system was a highly effective method of transferring money via mobile phone to people in need. The Government also used local FM radio stations to issue flood warnings and monitor flood levels using specialized equipment. Faced with two consecutive seasons of particularly heavy rain, it had pre-positioned food and non-food items as a safety net to reduce the suffering of displaced persons and had avoided deaths by moving people to higher ground.

58. **Mr. Laroche** (Assistant Director-General for Health Action in Crises, WHO) said that, in view of the closer links that now existed between humanitarian action and longer-term development approaches, it would be advisable to move from annual to multi-year consolidated-appeals-process funding, in order to ensure continuity when embarking on urgent humanitarian measures with long-term consequences. For example, if a child was sent to school as part of an urgent humanitarian response, it was important to ensure that he or she could remain at school the following year.

59. Closer links should also be forged between the various humanitarian actors in a given situation. In Haiti, for example, there was a lack of information about the programmes being run by different NGOs, including the budgets they required in order to continue their activities the following year. The cluster system should provide the means for closer collaboration between the various actors. Furthermore, although a mid- and long-term perspective was critical when taking humanitarian action, the response was in reality often short-sighted and risked compounding the reasons for the disaster. The recovery cluster should facilitate the adoption of a longer-term perspective. Thirdly, the coordination systems established for humanitarian action should also be appropriate to the transition to development. At present, such coordination systems were often fragmented and did not facilitate continuity between humanitarian and development activities. Lastly, it was important to remember that no recovery or development process could be initiated in the absence of hope at the political and individual level; such a process could not be forced.

60. **Mr. Holmes** (Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator), moderator, said that the possibility of combining short- and long-term financing was being explored in the case of Kenya, which faced both short- and long-term problems. GIVAS, which sought to integrate information from existing sources in ways that would be particularly helpful for actors on the ground, was already operational, although it was not yet producing full results.

61. **Mr. Byman** (Observer for Sweden) asked how the various United Nations agencies represented on the panel could work to promote the integration of disaster-risk reduction within the development agenda and persuade development actors to take the lead.

62. **Mr. Rahman** (Bangladesh) said that, while all the panellists had made very helpful presentations, they had failed to highlight the role of local government, which performed a very important function in Bangladesh, and had largely ignored the potential of South-South cooperation. There appeared to be a governance deficit in GFDRR, since vulnerable countries were not reflected in its Consultative Group.

Lastly, it was critical that data should be disaggregated, including by gender, in order for vulnerabilities to be correctly identified.

63. **Ms. Mahmood** (Chief, Humanitarian Response Branch, UNFPA) said that, as a development agency, UNFPA was working to mainstream emergency preparedness and humanitarian response into its programme development. It was also providing input for the Hyogo Framework for Action mid-term review in such areas as gender policy, capacity-building and the strengthening of health facilities, and was working with WHO on sustainable recovery from disasters. South-South cooperation was extremely important; in that connection, Bangladesh was a prime example of a country able to share its expertise and experience of disaster-risk reduction.

64. **Ms. Shaban** (Kenya, Minister of State for Special Programmes) said that, in Kenya, district steering groups, which incorporated all the various stakeholders, including drought management, water and agricultural officers, local-government representatives and the district commissioner, implemented the decisions taken at national level. Local governments played a very valuable role as the first responders in a crisis and as providers of data to the national Government. Partnerships were also very important in finding practical solutions to problems and much could be learned from best practices in other countries. Her Government was, for example, looking to benefit from the experience of Bangladesh in the area of flood management.

65. Most Governments in developing countries did not allocate enough funding to disaster-risk reduction and were over-dependent on their development partners in that regard. The way forward was for Governments themselves to allocate more funds to disaster-risk reduction in order to ensure that the relevant policies were implemented more rapidly.

66. **Mr. Jha** (Manager and Head, GFDRR, World Bank), referring to the integration of disaster-risk reduction within the development agenda, said that the United Nations system was working with a number of partners, including Member States, regional development banks and international financial institutions, to that end. A programme had been initiated within the United Nations system to examine how the different agencies would incorporate disaster-risk reduction in their multi-year assistance programmes in priority countries, through the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), and cooperation was ongoing with the European Commission with a view to disaster-risk reduction being included in the Commission's country strategy papers.

67. Following recent governance reform of GFDRR, six developing countries were now full members of its Consultative Group. GFDRR also had a very strong South-South cooperation programme, which allowed Governments to seek funding in order to learn from the experiences of other Southern countries in such areas as new-tool development or policy formulation.

68. **Mr. Thomas** (Director, Emergency Operations and Rehabilitation Division, FAO) said that FAO was mainstreaming disaster-risk reduction as part of its new strategic framework, which included a strategic objective of improved preparedness for, and effective response to, food and agricultural threats and emergencies. FAO would be accountable to its members not only for its own progress in delivering results but also for its work in strengthening the capacity of its members and partners to prepare for, and respond to, emergencies.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.

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Economic and Social Council

Provisional

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Provisional summary record of the 36th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 15 July 2010, at 3 p.m.

President: Mr. Errázuriz (Vice-President) ..... (Chile)

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Special economic, humanitarian and disaster relief assistance (*continued*)

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In the absence of Mr. Ali (Malaysia), Mr. Errázuriz (Chile), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Special economic, humanitarian and disaster relief assistance (*continued*) (E/2010/88-A/65/82)

1. **Mr. Heller** (Observer for Mexico) said that the Secretary-General's report on strengthening the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations (E/2010/88-A/65/82) was particularly important in that it emphasized a multidimensional approach. Efforts to provide humanitarian solutions to the effects of large-scale, man-made problems, such as armed conflicts and climate change, had been fragmented by the increasing number and impact of other crises, such as the food, financial and energy crises. The traditional issues of concern, such as armed conflicts, should no longer be viewed in and of themselves as the cause of humanitarian emergencies, but rather as the result of a combination of factors.

2. His delegation was increasingly concerned about the lack of secure access to affected populations and how it undermined international efforts to provide aid in high-risk environments. General Assembly resolution 46/182 highlighted the importance of providing humanitarian assistance in cases of disaster with due respect for the principles, of humanity, neutrality and impartiality. Those principles were based on established international laws that protected the rights to life and integrity of the person. State and humanitarian actors therefore had a solid legal basis available to guide their aid actions in cases of natural disasters.

3. His delegation did not believe that the response to emergency humanitarian needs should be broadened to include an approach based on degrees of vulnerability. Such an approach would be a declaration that prevention and early-warning systems had failed. The focus should instead be on reducing vulnerability, which was a factor in all societies, and on strengthening capacity-building mechanisms to prevent situations from "gradually" becoming serious, chronic or catastrophic. Development strategies should emphasize ways of identifying and mitigating the risk factors responsible for humanitarian crises.

4. The Central Emergency Response Fund offered the type of rigorous follow-up and accountability system required to provide an efficient humanitarian response to emergencies. His Government affirmed its commitment to the Fund and in addition would be contributing human and financial resources to the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination team and was in the process of formalizing its participation in the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group. His Government would also continue to support the efforts of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the International Committee of the Red Cross to build Mexico's capacity to provide international emergency aid.

5. **Mr. Sergeyev** (Ukraine) said that progress had been made in promoting a coordinated approach to humanitarian issues, as evidenced by the global response to the earthquake in Haiti. His own Government had contributed half a million dollars to the Central Emergency Response Fund for Haiti's recovery. However, coordination between United Nations agencies and its operational activities system still needed to be strengthened, without prejudice to the principles of neutrality, humanity and respect for the sovereignty of States in humanitarian assistance efforts.

6. Risk management strategies should work to integrate disaster risk mitigation into sustainable development approaches. In that sense, the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction was a significant framework for the international community to develop resilience to natural, technological and environmental disasters. Ensuring efficient transitions from humanitarian relief activities to long-term development processes was also critical.

7. Nearly 25 years after the Chernobyl disaster, there was still evidence of its complex, negative and long-term impacts in Ukraine. In that sense, continuing the timely implementation of projects under the Decade of Recovery and Sustainable Development of the Affected Regions initiative was vital. His delegation also looked forward to support from the international donor community, and hoped that the aftermath of the Chernobyl accident would be appropriately addressed in the United Nations Development Assistance Framework for Ukraine for the period 2012-2016 and in the country programmes managed by the United Nations Children's Fund and the United Nations Development Programme.

8. His delegation expressed appreciation for the promptness with which the United Nations had responded to the request for assistance in addressing the emergency situation in the Ukrainian town of Kalush, which had been declared an "emergency ecological situation zone". Potassium ore mining and processing activities were affecting the environment and people in the area, and the United Nations and the European Commission had conducted a joint technical scoping mission in March 2010 to investigate the risks and the possible spread of hazardous waste. The mission had helped the national authorities to identify the best solutions to the situation, as well as short- and long-term measure to reduce the threats.

9. **Mr. Nofukuka** (Observer for South Africa) said that the consequences of the natural disasters which had occurred in the first half of 2010 required the continued and focused support of the international humanitarian community, despite the continuing financial and economic crisis. Building and strengthening national and local preparedness, prevention, resilience, mitigation and response capacity remained critical.

10. His country had helped to address the needs of affected countries through its annual contribution to the Central Emergency Response Fund and contributions to the World Food Programme and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, and would continue to do so within its modest means. Given the increasing financial pressure on agencies that addressed humanitarian emergencies, donor countries should increase their generous support by providing multi-year, non-earmarked additional resources to meet global humanitarian challenges in a way that was not to the detriment of resources made available for international cooperation for development.

11. His delegation agreed with the Secretary-General that consideration should be given to strategies to bring about a shift within the humanitarian system from a "shock-driven" approach towards a more needs-based and vulnerability-led response. Such a shift should include a stronger focus on so-called forgotten emergencies and further debate on how to define "vulnerabilities" and the triggers for responding to appeals for assistance, all within the broader context of the increased challenges posed by the impact of climate change and increasing global food insecurity.

12. National and international humanitarian agencies should continue to deliver support to Member States in line with the core humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality and neutrality agreed to in General Assembly resolution 46/182 and the principle of independence as adopted in its resolution 58/114. Adherence to the principles embodied in those resolutions would go a long way towards providing an enabling environment in which humanitarian actors could obtain access to affected communities and deliver assistance.

13. His delegation commended the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs for its efforts to improve the international humanitarian response capacity system, including through the use of the cluster approach. His country also urged all relevant international humanitarian entities to continue to work with the Office to enhance the coordination, effectiveness, and efficiency of humanitarian assistance.

14. It was essential to strengthen humanitarian assistance to people living under foreign occupation, and he called on all humanitarian actors to cooperate fully with the United Nations and other humanitarian agencies and organizations and to ensure the safe and unhindered access of humanitarian personnel and delivery of supplies and equipment, in order to allow humanitarian personnel to perform efficiently their task of assisting affected civilian populations.

15. His delegation hoped that the draft resolution concerning the item under consideration (E/2010/L.15) would be adopted by consensus.

16. **Mr. Al Bayati** (Iraq) pointed out that the numbers of internally displaced persons in Iraq and Iraqi refugees living abroad provided in the report before the Council (A/65/82-E/2010/88) were much higher than the numbers indicated in the Secretary-General's most recent report prepared pursuant to paragraph 6 of Security Council resolution 1883 (2009) (S/2010/240). Moreover, contrary to information contained in paragraphs 23 and 25 of document A/65/82-E/2010/88, there had been no attacks targeting United Nations civilian personnel or NGO personnel in any part of Iraq during the period 1 July 2008 to 30 June 2009.

17. His Government had worked hard to facilitate the voluntary return of Iraqi refugees and internally displaced Iraqis to their original homes and to ameliorate their social, health and living conditions in

the interest of achieving national reconciliation, unifying Iraqi society and establishing the rule of law. Given the significant improvement in the security situation following the implementation of security plans in all regions of the country, it hoped to close its file of internally displaced persons permanently before the end of 2010. He listed the many steps the Government had taken which had rapidly and effectively contributed to the voluntary return of both the internally displaced and those living abroad.

18. **Mr. Suárez** (Observer for Colombia), commenting on the Secretary-General's report (A/65/82-E/2010/88), stressed the importance of providing national and local institutions with capacity-building support, including staff training, adequate institutional and technical resources and support in coordinating partnerships with civil society. Such efforts would also ensure a more efficient use of funding for humanitarian assistance. Regarding the consolidation of the various mechanisms for assistance within the United Nations, he emphasized the need to integrate national Governments' plans into those efforts at coherence. The results of the independent evaluation of the cluster approach conducted in several countries had revealed the importance of coordination both among cluster members, and with national structures. His delegation looked forward to the new management plan that had been developed in response to the evaluation.

19. Needs assessments were an indispensable component for providing an effective humanitarian response. His delegation urged the United Nations to collaborate more closely with Governments when determining needs, as national institutions kept detailed records on affected populations. In that regard, he expressed concern over the ambiguous data on the number of displaced persons in Colombia provided in the Secretary-General's report. The figures were derived from a period extending over 13 years, which did not reflect the significant reduction in displaced persons that had been recently achieved through improved security measures and the demobilization of armed groups. The data also did not reflect the Government's investment in the return and social and economic stabilization of victims through the implementation of a multisectoral policy and a budget of over US$ 500 million annually over the past four years. His delegation trusted that future reports of the Secretary-General would be more accurate and comprehensive on the issue of internal displacement in Colombia.

20. He recognized the achievements of the Central Emergency Response Fund in helping to provide humanitarian responses, including in his country. Colombia's Government had supported the Fund's objectives through financial contributions in 2007, 2009 and 2010.

21. He joined the condemnations of attacks against humanitarian personnel and commended the Emergency Response Coordinator's efforts to promote structured engagement as a significant means of strengthening security. As in all matters related to humanitarian assistance, coordination with national Governments should be an essential part of that process. From the outset, humanitarian assistance should contribute to a reconstruction process that would ensure post-emergency stability and contribute to long-term solutions. In that sense, his delegation supported the Secretary-General's call for greater coordination between humanitarian actors, development partners and national authorities to ensure an appropriate transition to sustainable development.

22. **Mr. Petranto** (Observer for Indonesia) said that while the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs was essential to the provision assistance in emergency situations, the ultimate goal should be to create self-sufficiency and resilience among all countries. Governments needed to be able to prevent disasters from reversing development gains. However, not all countries were equipped to establish the national monitoring system such an effort required. Development and humanitarian actors should therefore be proactive in strengthening preparedness and prevention capacities as part of their efforts. The Secretary-General's report had highlighted the dual challenges of operating in a high-risk environment and dealing with vulnerability. A balance was required between responding to events and reducing risks.

23. United Nations operations should remain engaged with local communities in order to gauge risk factors and ensure safety. Strategic cooperation between humanitarian and development actors and affected populations was also key to reducing vulnerabilities. Such work should include capacity-building and changing local attitudes to approach disasters proactively through risk management measures.

24. Indonesia was working in regional partnerships to strengthen national capacities to address humanitarian situations. Access to sufficient resources and trust among humanitarian actors were essential to successful operations. In that regard, Member States' recent discussions on humanitarian issues had reflected the various partnerships that had evolved on the ground.

25. **Ms. Kalamwina** (Zambia) said that her country had not been spared by natural disasters in the past year, with floods affecting 10 per cent of all households, displacing thousands, causing food shortages and forcing most of the poor into extreme poverty, compounded by disease and unemployment. Together with NGOs and other partners, Zambia was instituting social protection programmes for vulnerable groups, providing more food security for farmers, welfare for destitute households in the form of educational, health and social support, cash grants to individuals and households living in extreme poverty, and special protection to children in difficult circumstances, such as street children or child victims of gender-based violence.

26. After stating that donors had a duty to honour pledges to the Central Emergency Response Fund, an important tool that needed an adequate and predictable flow of resources, she observed that capacity-building and preparedness were as important as relief activities, and the developing countries and the regional institutions helping them needed support in those areas. At the same time, coordination arrangements were needed to organize the growing number of those now working to help build capacity.

27. **Ms. Bethel** (Bahamas) said that risk management and the reduction of vulnerability was a high priority for the Bahamas, which was no stranger to humanitarian challenges, both natural and man-made. The international humanitarian system would undergird that process, as recent encouraging improvements moved it from a shock-driven to a more effective needs-based response.

28. The Bahamas was heartened by the continued active engagement of the United Nations in Haiti over the past several years. The incisive, informative report of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti (E/2010/CRP.5) could serve as a useful guide not only for the Council but for the entire international community as it worked with the Haitian authorities and people, who must ultimately be in control of the recovery and reconstruction process. The Group's report put the spotlight on some of the best ways to promote effective and sustainable development support to Haiti, suggesting specific measures and approaches. Stability and security in Haiti were crucial, for without them social or economic progress would be stymied. A coordinated approach by the numerous NGOs working in Haiti, in accordance with the Government's priorities, must be the fundamental guiding principle for assistance to that country.

29. **Mr. Loulichki** (Morocco) said that the Secretary-General's report underscored urgent humanitarian needs, including those of one billion people affected by the food crisis and 27 million internally displaced by armed conflicts. The combined effects of armed conflicts, natural disasters and food and financial crises created a situation which pricked the collective conscience of the international community and put its humanity to the test.

30. While the international response to the earthquake in Haiti had been massive, much remained to be done before the population could again live a normal existence. The lessons learned by the United Nations system and other organizations from that painful experience would no doubt improve the operational response to natural disasters in the future.

31. The continuing attacks on humanitarian personnel noted in the Secretary-General's report called for a response from Member States, and his delegation condemned all such acts of aggression. It hoped that the forthcoming report of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs would suggest ways of safeguarding the capacity of humanitarian organizations to act effectively.

32. Conflict situations were responsible for increasing humanitarian needs. In Africa, matters were made worse by chronic drought conditions, resulting in massive displacements of populations and subsequent conditions of insecurity, famine and ill health, particularly among women and children.

33. Humanitarian assistance organizations must have access to affected populations, in line with the core humanitarian principles of impartiality, neutrality, humanity and independence. They must therefore dissociate themselves entirely from all political agendas and remain transparent in their motives. His delegation supported an approach whereby the United Nations would continue to intervene on an ad hoc

basis, while also managing structural, progressive vulnerabilities, such as drought or the effects of the food and financial crises. The humanitarian response in cases of gradually developing situations would be deployed in the event of a breakdown, as determined by reliable and precise indicators within a framework for long-term development. That approach required an emphasis on preventive measures, preparation and strengthened partnerships between Governments, development actors and other stakeholders.

34. His delegation welcomed the fact that the Central Emergency Response Fund continued to respond to crisis situations, despite the limited funding available. Assistance efforts at the national level should focus on building capacity for disaster risk reduction and disaster preparedness. He praised the effort made by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs to work with national authorities to strengthen government capacities.

35. His delegation commended the "one-stop shop" approach, which promoted direct and continuous communication between local authorities and humanitarian and development actors. Such partnerships placed national and local actors at the centre of humanitarian activities, which allowed for a more efficient use of aid that responded to affected population's true needs.

36. The success and impact of international humanitarian assistance depended on the mobilization of logistical and financial resources as much as it did on human resources. Despite the fact that contributions had increased to nearly $7 billion in 2009, funding still fell short of needs. United Nations efforts to streamline costs and train humanitarian actors should receive the support of Member States through continuous funding.

37. **Mr. Mercado** (United States of America) said that perhaps the most challenging of the many disasters with which the United Nations had dealt in the past year had been the earthquake in Haiti, which had affected millions of lives and caused damage estimated at nearly $8 billion. In the period since, significant progress had been made in providing emergency assistance. Working together, the Government, the United Nations, the Red Cross Movement, international and national NGOs and the Haitian people themselves had delivered humanitarian relief in the form of food, clean water and medical care to the millions affected.

38. Yet much remained to be done. It was not solely a question of financial resources, however, but also of rethinking the ways in which assistance was delivered. All stakeholders in the relief, recovery and development of Haiti must design innovative programmes so that the aid could be used to transform the country by building institutional capacity, reducing vulnerabilities and strengthening Haiti's capacity to provide for itself.

39. Similarly, the Organization should strive to reform the international humanitarian system at every opportunity. A recent study of the performance of the international humanitarian system by the Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action had paralleled the Secretary-General's own assessment in his report (A/65/82-E/2010/88). International humanitarian assistance could be only as effective as its leadership. The humanitarian coordinators system in particular needed persons selected for their experience and background in disaster risk reduction and disaster response who could be promptly deployed in the aftermath of a large-scale disaster. All too often the United Nations had moved too slowly to shift from development mode to disaster-response mode during an emergency.

40. The continued work of the Global Humanitarian Platform had strengthened much-needed partnerships between the United Nations agencies, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs, whose inclusion in the United Nations humanitarian country teams was a positive development, for they brought a wealth of knowledge and experience that would only strengthen the response to crises.

41. Another challenge was the ability to operate in high-risk environments. Attacks against humanitarian aid workers by armed groups were occurring with alarming frequency in place like Somalia, the Sudan and Afghanistan. That was to be deplored, but at the same time, creative and effective solutions must be found to continue the delivery of humanitarian assistance in such countries, and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs was to be applauded for its efforts in that regard.

42. **Mr. Porretti** (Argentina) said that the Secretary-General's report and the Council's subsequent discussions, as well as recent experiences in Chile, China and Haiti, had made clear that the changing nature of humanitarian emergencies demanded

flexibility of approach and creativity to improve the efficiency of assistance efforts, from the time of the initial response through the subsequent reconstruction and development stages.

43. The international community should continue to seek financing mechanisms of a type that provided timely access to funds, such as the Central Emergency Response Fund. In addition, the recommendations of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction should be implemented to reduce vulnerability, and prevention efforts should include the participation of civil society and relevant State agencies. Furthermore, all international humanitarian assistance should be based on the principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence, and the work should be coordinated by United Nations agencies in accordance with a mandate agreed with the national authorities. In that regard, it was vital that States should work to create unimpeded access to crisis-affected areas.

44. Argentina had provided continuous support for initiatives to ensure the security of humanitarian personnel. His delegation was in full agreement with the notion that humanitarian assistance should be of a fundamentally civilian nature, and that any military involvement should be undertaken with the consent of the affected State, in line with international law.

45. In terms of facilitating the provision of assistance through the development of common procedures across countries, Argentina had been promoting a regional focus, including hosting a third regional meeting on international humanitarian assistance mechanisms. The meeting had served as a forum to identify regional challenges, share experiences and consolidate joint efforts.

46. **Ms. del Águila-Castillo** (Guatemala) said that, as a country that had benefited from United Nations humanitarian assistance on three occasions in the past five years, Guatemala would be remiss if it did not acknowledge the superb work of the United Nations system, which had responded rapidly to the dual disaster of a volcanic eruption and a hurricane in Guatemala, as it had done in the natural disasters that regularly affected the region.

47. While still receiving humanitarian aid, Guatemala had offered help when the earthquake struck Haiti. The possibility of being a beneficiary country one day and a contributing country the next was at the very root of humanitarian assistance, which was inspired by a sentiment of solidarity but at the same time required complex administrative and logistical skills — skills that the United Nations system displayed to a high degree.

48. **Mr. Dornig** (Liechtenstein) said that the ability to deliver humanitarian assistance to populations in need was increasingly jeopardized by deliberate attacks on humanitarian workers, facilities and vehicles. Such attacks were political in nature and conflict-related for humanitarian agents were often not perceived as neutral, and the changing nature of warfare was giving rise to criminality and banditry. To increase the acceptance of humanitarian assistance in high-risk environments, its delivery must be dissociated from political and military goals and underpinned by a constant outreach to community leaders and local authorities, and it must be complemented by appropriate, sufficiently funded security. The new United Nations security management approach and its broader security collaboration with international organizations and NGOs in the "Saving Lives Together" framework were most welcome.

49. Globally, an estimated 27 million had been internally displaced by armed conflicts. Humanitarian operations in high-risk environments had often failed to address the different vulnerabilities of women, girls, boys and men. Women, particularly, were vulnerable in situations of displacement as they were forced to adopt new strategies to provide for themselves and their families that included prostitution, trading sex for food or leaving the relative safety of refugee camps to collect firewood. Liechtenstein, in cooperation with the Women's Refugee Commission, had hosted a panel discussion on such questions as the link between gender-based violence and livelihoods. One of the main findings had been that programmes must address the shift in household power dynamics, for men in displacement settings were likely to lose their status while women often took on additional roles and responsibilities. It should be noted that in addition to exacerbating gender-based violence, the indoor use of firewood in humanitarian settings caused respiratory infections that killed more people every year than malaria and hastened environmental degradation. The response to the cross-cutting fuel issue had tended to be minimal, and Liechtenstein therefore welcomed the endorsement of a set of multisectoral guidance tools by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, which allowed clusters or agencies to deal with safe access to

appropriate cooking fuel from the start of every emergency.

50. **Mr. Momen** (Bangladesh) said that his own country had been suffering from the most extreme vulnerability to climate change for some time, because of its low-lying, deltaic, monsoonal situation. Bangladesh's contribution to climate change was negligible, yet it was one of its worst victims: while the scientific prediction was that by 2050 one in 45 people would be displaced by climate change worldwide, in Bangladesh the figure would be one in seven. The Secretary-General's report indicated that the international response to natural disasters tended to be less robust than it was to armed conflicts, but his delegation hoped that more resources would be dedicated to dealing with natural disasters. Bangladesh had developed some good practices in risk reduction and disaster mitigation that it would be happy to share through South-South, South-North or even triangular cooperation.

51. Many developing countries, particularly the least developed, lacked a rapid-response capacity and adequate resources, especially given the frequency and magnitude of recent natural disasters such as the devastating cyclones in Bangladesh, where rehabilitation was continuing four years later and some remote areas had not yet been reached. Consequently, local government institutions had been playing the usual role of first and sustained responder, requiring much coordination.

52. Planning for humanitarian operations required a good understanding of the socio-economic environment of the country affected. Moreover, assistance should be needs-based rather than supply-driven. In that connection, it was much more economical to procure goods and food from local markets in the affected areas.

53. **Mr. Jaiswal** (India) said that international humanitarian law and the guiding principles of humanity, neutrality and impartiality set out in the annex to General Assembly resolution 46/182 provided the legal foundation for humanitarian operations and must be respected. Member States had the primary responsibility to provide assistance in emergencies but might not always have necessary means to do so. The United Nations had to complement the efforts of Member States, and nations must cooperate among themselves, in finding collective solutions. Furthermore, there must be bilateral, regional and international cooperation not only during the emergency response but throughout the stages of effective disaster management: disaster preparedness, the use of early-warning systems and relief and rehabilitation.

54. The United Nations must improve its coordination and delivery of international humanitarian assistance by increasing the operational capacities of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and of the United Nations funds and programmes and through greater accountability. The Central Emergency Response Fund should be made into a viable, dynamic mechanism for responding to disasters; its institution testified to the interest that all Member States had in the humanitarian agenda, and his own Government was committed to contributing half a million dollars annually for the period 2009-2011.

55. In the case of disasters, prevention was better than cure, and risk reduction and preparedness needed to be mainstreamed into development policies. India aimed to develop a holistic, proactive, multi-disaster and technology-driven strategy, resting on community-based disaster management, capacity development, consolidation of past initiatives and best practices, and cooperation with national, regional and international agencies. In addition, it was committed to creating an institutional and legal framework for disaster management and an enabling regulatory environment together with a compliance regime.

56. **Monsignor Bharanikulangara** (Observer for the Holy See) observed that his delegation, while supporting national ownership and country-led leadership in humanitarian activities, stressed that, in the exercise of responsible sovereignty, public officials had the duty to ensure that timely humanitarian assistance was delivered to victims irrespective of their social status, creed or ideology, because respect for the basic rights of individuals, their families and communities must be upheld. Of particular concern were efforts to use humanitarian catastrophes as opportunities to exploit those in need for institutional or personal gain.

57. In addition, international humanitarian law demanded the protection of humanitarian personnel and the provision of unimpeded access to people in need. It was thus the responsibility of political and military personnel to ensure that measures were taken

to provide humanitarian personnel with safe access to people in need and to protect them against criminally motivated attacks, kidnappings and abduction.

58. The Holy See appreciated the work of all United Nations humanitarian personnel and other associated actors who were engaged in high-risk situations and rendering humanitarian assistance without regard for their own safety. Those persons needed the ongoing support and assistance of the international community.

59. The scale and generosity of the contributions in cash and in kind that had flowed into Haiti during the recent earthquake demonstrated the commitment of the international community to help victims and to rebuild communities. The timely call for internationalized engagement and an enhanced multilateral response under the leadership of the United Nations had produced notable results.

60. Emergency situations did not negate the requirements of accountability and transparency in humanitarian activities. Responsibly managing resources and preserving the credibility and accountability of the humanitarian response would encourage donors and beneficiaries alike.

61. While acknowledging the great value of the contribution of the United Nations humanitarian agencies in humanitarian emergencies, his delegation emphasized the important role also played by faith-based organizations, regional and local NGOs and civil society. During the recent tragic earthquake in Haiti, it had been noted by the international media that the first actors on the scene extending humanitarian help had been those of the Catholic Church. Local organizations and civil society often had better knowledge of the conditions and local concerns and could facilitate easier access and efficient delivery of humanitarian assistance.

62. Along with material assistance, the psychological and spiritual strengthening of the victims, especially raising the morale of the most vulnerable, were important in natural and man-made disasters. The well-being and education of children merited special attention and humanitarian agents must help prevent exploitation, abuse or trafficking of them. Splitting up families, especially separating children from their parents, jeopardized communities, destroyed the psychological and social fabric of communities and left the victims in need of special assistance. Refugees, especially women and children, internally displaced persons, asylum-seekers and detainees needed to be guaranteed security and protection.

63. His delegation was concerned about vulnerable situations in a context of ongoing armed conflicts, community violence and terrorist attacks. Human rights violations, particularly sexual abuse, forced labour and the recruitment of child soldiers, were continuing concerns. The Holy See decried sex-based violence in humanitarian emergencies and called for legal protection of the victims and prosecution of the perpetrators.

64. Equally important were the rehabilitation of victims, the reinsertion of children into educational systems, the reunion of families and the reconstruction of labour markets. In addition, capacity-building to respond to disasters and humanitarian response preparedness were fundamental, including the drafting of guidelines on civil-military coordination and the protection of civilians.

65. In the light of the long-standing experience of the Catholic Church in addressing humanitarian needs in every part of the world, he underlined the urgency of strengthening the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance within the United Nations. His delegation committed itself to the continued provision of non-partisan humanitarian assistance to victims in cooperation with all stakeholders engaged in such activities.

66. **Ms. Mosquini** (Observer for the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies) said that strengthening the coordination of humanitarian assistance remained a top priority for the her organization. Effective, coordinated humanitarian action became all the more necessary as humanitarian needs became more complex, as was occurring at present owing to the global food, energy, financial and economic crises and a confluence of natural and man-made hazards.

67. To enhance coordination and strengthen response capacity within the international Red Cross and Red Crescent movement, the Federation had developed a portfolio of response tools which could be adapted to each particular humanitarian setting. For example, the Emergency Response Units (ERUs) brought together highly trained teams of Red Cross or Red Crescent specialists and pre-packed sets of standardized equipment ready for immediate use in emergencies. They filled gaps in the first phase of the emergency

response by providing essential health services, water and sanitation as well as logistics and telecommunications support. A total of 21 such units had been deployed in Haiti alone, the largest number ever deployed to a single country.

68. The Federation's investment in building its own internal response capacity was complemented by its equal commitment to coordination with the wider humanitarian community, for example with the United Nations through the Inter-Agency Standing Committee.

69. Achievements in response capacity and coordination must be matched by equal advances in disaster preparedness and risk reduction, but appeals for funding in such areas generally fell on deaf ears. Why was it that an appeal to reinforce infrastructure before disaster struck was undersubscribed, when an appeal to reconstruct whole cities after the disaster was fully covered? Donors should be more aware of the value of prevention, in terms of both money saved and human suffering avoided.

70. The Federation was also continuing its efforts to build legal preparedness. The Guidelines for the Domestic Facilitation and Regulation of International Disaster Relief and Initial Recovery Assistance (IDRL Guidelines) had been adopted two years previously at the International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, and over two dozen national review processes were using those Guidelines to examine strengths and weaknesses in national laws. As noted in the Secretary-General's report, the Federation had also continued to cooperate with the United Nations in assisting and encouraging States to use the Guidelines, by means such as the inclusion of Federation legal experts in United Nations preparedness missions to Peru, the Comoros and El Salvador, and cooperation in the delivery of regional training workshops in Almaty, Bangkok, Nairobi, Panama and Suva.

71. In line with the views expressed in the Secretary-General's report, the Federation affirmed the importance of a needs-based and vulnerability-led response in order to meet humanitarian needs in an equitable manner. In the context of emerging challenges, such as the humanitarian consequences of climate change and the impact of rapid urbanization, the international community must maintain its focus to reach the most vulnerable in society.

72. **Mr. De Looz Karageorgiades** (Observer for the Sovereign Military Order of Malta) said that, in keeping with its original mission of helping the sick, the poor and the abandoned, regardless of race, religion, or ethnicity, the Order would be guided by the conclusions and recommendations of the excellent report by the Secretary-General, particularly of his enunciation of the core humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence and the emphasis on improving national and local capabilities and disaster preparedness.

73. Malteser International, the Order's global humanitarian aid body, was supporting 200 projects in over 20 countries. It was particularly engaged in the Central African Republic and had been one of the first to bring medical aid to the victims of the January earthquake in Haiti, where it had provided humanitarian and medical assistance for years. To give priority to gender equality and prevent gender-based violence was also one of the Order's goals in pursuing its centuries-old objective of ending hunger, poverty and disease.

74. **Ms. Muedin** (Observer for the International Organization for Migration) observed that collaboration and coordination were of greatest relevance in situations of population displacement and sudden population movements. The issue of internal displacement was multifaceted, requiring many organizations to work collaboratively on different aspects. Several years into the implementation of the "cluster approach", and through its use in response to the earthquake in Haiti, tangible results had been seen in terms of collaboration and coordination, but the sheer magnitude of the catastrophe in Haiti had revealed a need for adjustments to the system in order to improve response. In particular, the need to better incorporate multidimensional and cross-cutting issues into the humanitarian response, such as those related to gender, land ownership, rubble removal or urban planning, appeared to be critical to the improvement of the system. Inter-cluster coordination and strong humanitarian leadership were key areas where improvements were necessary in order for the cluster system to achieve its full potential.

75. Another challenge in the context of the emergency response in Haiti related to the surge response capacity for the coordination of humanitarian assistance. Although all agencies had provided outstanding surge support in response to the earthquake, the magnitude of the disaster had limited its effectiveness. Procedures for rapid recruitment,

procurement and logistical support needed to be further improved.

76. As the cluster lead for camp coordination and camp management in natural disasters, ensuring that sites for internally displaced persons had adequate camp management support was a key priority for the organization. Areas of focus were strengthening community resilience, managing information regarding the sites and the affected populations, supporting partners carrying out coordination and management responsibilities, including national civil society and local authorities, ensuring uniform standards were met and liaising with local government and affected populations.

77. Climate change would have serious consequences for millions of people and their countries and communities in both the near and the more distant future. In that respect, the International Organization for Migration echoed the Secretary-General's call for "a shift [...] from a 'shock-driven' towards a more needs-based and vulnerability-led response" (A/65/82, para. 36). In particular, it should be stressed that while gradual environmental changes such as drought and desertification appeared to be a less obvious push factor for migration than extreme environmental events, it was those gradual processes that were expected to trigger most environmental migration in the longer term.

78. To pursue comprehensive approaches to environmental migration and to foster the needed synergies among the relevant disciplines, the International Organization for Migration had been working closely with a range of relevant actors, most notably with its humanitarian partners, including within the framework of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee and with the agencies dealing with environment and development issues.

79. Her organization also wanted to take the opportunity to thank the Under-Secretary-General for his excellent work as the Emergency Relief Coordinator and to wish him success in his future endeavours.

80. **Mr. Gokcen** (Observer for the Organization of the Islamic Conference) observed that, according to estimates, almost half of the world's 42 million displaced people lived in the States members of the Organization of the Islamic Conference. The socio-economic and political challenges caused by the population displacements were not easy to deal with either for the refugees or for the countries hosting them, and those difficulties undermined efforts to solve other political and security problems.

81. The Organization of the Islamic Conference had formally entered the humanitarian affairs domain with a coordination and operation capacity following a decision by the Islamic Summit in December 2005, which had mandated the Organization to play an increasingly active role in providing humanitarian aid and assistance after disasters. That mandate should be seen as complementary to the new vision of the Organization of the Islamic Conference emphasizing the importance of socio-economic development and modernization in the member States. Consequently, the General Secretariat had established a Humanitarian Affairs Department, which had subsequently responded to emergency and development needs in a number of countries and regions, including Afghanistan, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Burkina Faso, Gaza, Indonesia, Iraq, the Niger, Pakistan, Sierra Leone, Somalia, the Sudan and Yemen.

82. The International Donors' Conference for the Development and Reconstruction of Darfur organized by the Organization of the Islamic Conference in March 2010 was among the recent examples of its successful humanitarian initiatives. The Conference had yielded pledges worth US$ 852 million and paved the way for the establishment of a development bank in Darfur.

83. The humanitarian situation in Gaza was a major concern. Since September 2009, the Humanitarian Department had facilitated the passage through various channels to the Gaza Strip of humanitarian assistance to a value of US$ 14 million. That assistance had been a coordinated effort on the part of numerous civil society organizations in member States, Europe and the United States. The Organization of the Islamic Conference believed that the Gaza Strip would need continued assistance in order to return life to normal even after the Israeli blockade was completely lifted. Consequently, the Organization had prepared a special programme valued at US$ 100 million for the rehabilitation of Palestinian society.

84. It was obvious that strong political on the part of the international community was required in terms of assistance to Gaza. The humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip would not be resolved without the complete

lifting of the Israeli blockade, opening of the crossings, and free circulation of humanitarian assistance and the materials necessary for rebuilding the destroyed infrastructure.

85. The humanitarian situation in Somalia was also among the priorities of the Organization, and it attached the utmost importance to the immediate implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding which it had signed with the World Food Programme on the subject of food aid distribution there.

86. Recently, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the Organization's General Secretariat had agreed to work together with other major humanitarian partners to develop a joint humanitarian strategy which would include, as a start, areas of common interest such as advocacy, resource mobilization, coordination, capacity-building and disaster preparedness and prevention.

87. Moreover, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and the Organization had identified a number of ways to strengthen their already excellent cooperation. The Organization's Secretary General had drawn the attention of its member States to the Agency's precarious financial situation and the risk of suspension of services to the Palestine refugees before the end of 2010 unless it received more support.

88. **Ms. Milovanovic** (World Health Organization) said that her organization was concerned by such additional challenges as the increasingly ageing population and the so called "silent emergency" of people suffering from non-communicable diseases, including cancer, stroke and diabetes. They and other problems would require the international community to adjust its approach to the notions of vulnerability and population in need.

89. Strengthening coordination of humanitarian assistance was of critical importance to all players working with emergencies, particularly in health. It had been seen time and again how the generosity and willingness of multiple humanitarian actors to contribute to emergency response could, in fact, hinder or complicate health relief activities. Haiti was a case in point, where some 600 entities had come under the Health Cluster banner following the earthquake. The scale of that example underscored the critical need for coordination in the health sector so as to save lives, treat the sick and wounded, improve levels of health care and make the best use of available resources. At the same time, the struggle to find enough resources to meet needs added its own burden. The financial crisis weighed heavily on all actors: Governments, United Nations bodies and humanitarian agencies. Meanwhile, human suffering continued.

90. To address those concerns, the World Health Organization was building inter-agency rosters of coordinators, information and communications officers, and technical experts and was training its in-country representatives to lead the Health Cluster. It was involving ministries of health and other local partners in the coordination function. It was also investing in the capacity-building of its partners, through measures such as staff development programmes, establishing a rapid response account, and developing and disseminating standard operating procedures.

91. **Mr. Iyer** (United Nations Children's Fund) observed that perhaps the main lesson that Haiti's disaster had taught was that affected people, besides being victims, were resilient, resourceful and proud: They were the most important actors when it came to building a better future.

92. For the international organizations, the challenges of humanitarian action during times of crisis were in some ways very distinct from those that they faced in development contexts. As they worked in situations where the humanitarian principles of impartiality, neutrality and independence were challenged, the imperative to assist those in need obliged the international organizations to devise innovative strategies to maintain programmes in very high risk contexts. That implied a need to conduct a careful analysis of the risks and then, in order to reduce them, to adopt strategies ranging from gaining acceptance within communities to strengthening national institutions so that they could uphold rights and maintain the rule of law.

93. But in other ways the core challenges that the international organizations faced in humanitarian actions were very similar to those they faced when working to promote sustainable peace and development. A major issue was the centrality of gender equality and the empowerment of women as a key strategy to ensure both equitable sustainable development and accountable humanitarian response. In both humanitarian action and development, it had

become evident that a focus on being prepared for crises and a deliberate effort to reduce disaster risk should be at the core of efforts to break the vicious cycle of chronic vulnerability. National capacity development was a fundamental strategy for ensuring wide coverage in basic services and large-scale impact in terms of results for children and women.

94. **Mr. Janz** (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)) said that the humanitarian community, in keeping with the guiding principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence, was persisting in its endeavour to protect and assist populations in need in crisis situations. In conflict areas, however, access to beneficiaries was often limited and the security of both victims of violence and humanitarian workers could be threatened. The Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees continued to count on States to help address that predicament.

95. UNHCR had identified four key areas for action to counter the problem. First, operations management could be improved through increased support for national and local partners. Second, staffing of high-risk operations could be enhanced through greater emphasis on political analysis, communications and the negotiation and language skills of staff. Third, the security of staff and beneficiaries could be improved in its "soft" aspects, such as through information gathering and processing and analysis of specific operational contexts to complement physical security measures.

96. Fourth, communication strategies could be developed in various ways: building a closer relationship with host populations; emphasizing the recruitment and training of national communications staff who spoke the language of host communities; and making use of traditional channels of communication and authority, such as elders, as well as mainstream media.

97. According to the Office's latest statistics, for the first time more refugees were living in cities and towns than in camps. Most lived in slums and shanty towns with limited or no access to education, health care and other essential services. The new urban refugee policy of UNHCR called on States, municipal authorities, civil society and humanitarian partners to join forces to protect and assist such persons. The needs of urban refugees had been addressed at the High Commissioner's Dialogue on Protection Challenges in December 2009 and the recent annual consultati with NGOs, and UNHCR was also organizing workshop in July with staff from seven cit designated as pilot sites for the policy.

98. Furthermore, UNHCR continued to support work of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Ta Force on Meeting Humanitarian Challenges in Urb Areas and was deepening its engagement with Unit Nations Development Assistance Framew (UNDAF) initiatives aimed at local populations.

99. Promoting gender equality at all levels w essential in addressing humanitarian challeng UNHCR had successfully built the awareness a capacity of its own staff to promote gender equal among refugees and displaced and stateless perso through its age, gender and diversity mainstreami approach. In all aspects of its work, UNHCR sought achieve gender equality in decision-making process Its operations promoted regular participat assessments among the beneficiaries of its assistance identify priorities which were then fed into joi planning exercises with its partners.

100. Partnerships were extremely important addressing any humanitarian emergency and were fundamental element of the UNHCR modus operan Discussions at the UNHCR annual consultations wi NGOs on the theme "National Partners: Providers First Resort" had confirmed the key role played l local partners in spearheading responses emergencies. UNHCR also liaised closely with sister United Nations agencies and with t International Red Cross and Red Crescent Moveme and constantly sought new ways to enhan cooperation and mutual support.

101. **Mr. Falatar** (United Nations Educationa Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO welcomed the recent adoption by the Gener Assembly of the landmark resolution on the right education in emergency situations. The resolutio recognized that conflicts and natural disasters we among the major impediments to achievi internationally agreed education targets such Millennium Development Goal 2 and the goals of t Education for All initiative. In post-conflict situation a failure to invest in education undermined t fulfilment of fundamental rights and placed alread affected and vulnerable populations at further risk.

102. Through the education cluster of the United Nations Inter-Agency Standing Committee and the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies, UNESCO contributed to a holistic approach to the early revitalization of education services in many conflict- and disaster-affected countries. Member States increasingly turned to UNESCO for specialized interventions to help address critical gaps during the humanitarian phase of post-conflict and post-natural-disaster response. He provided examples of its contributions in post-crisis settings in the areas of communications, culture, science and disaster risk reduction.

103. All UNESCO interventions were designed to complement the vital work of the major humanitarian response agencies and to be aligned with longer-term national development strategies. The response to the earthquake in Haiti was a case in point. Furthermore, the continued strengthening of humanitarian coordination mechanisms was absolutely essential, and UNESCO fully supported the main humanitarian actors, donors and member States which advocated a holistic approach to humanitarian response which covered education and other relevant gaps.

104. **The President** invited the Council to turn its attention to draft resolution E/2010/L.15, entitled "Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations" submitted by himself, on the basis of informal consultations. He expressed his deep gratitude to Ms. Kathryn Yarlett of Australia and Mr. Denny Abdy of Indonesia, who had ably led the negotiations on the document, which he understood now enjoyed consensus. He had been informed that the draft resolution contained no programme budget implications.

105. **Mr. Khane** (Secretary of the Council) pointed out that the printed text of the draft resolution erroneously stated that it had been submitted by Chile, rather than by the Vice-President.

106. *Draft resolution E/2010/L.15 was adopted.*

107. **Mr. Holmes** (Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator) expressed his appreciation to everyone who had participated in the debate, panels and side events for their very valuable input during the humanitarian affairs segment and assured Member States that his Office would respond in due course to all the points and issues raised.

108. Reviewing the topics addressed at the panel discussion on humanitarian assistance operations in highly hazardous or insecure and unsafe environments, he said that participants had agreed, inter alia, that humanitarian actions must strive to comply with humanitarian principles; that consideration should be given to using national and local capacities without transferring risk from international to local staff; and that adhering to established codes of conduct and ensuring complete transparency in programme implementation were essential.

109. Clearly, the efforts of humanitarian actors would be fruitless without support from Member States and host Governments, which should adhere, and promote adherence, to the basic principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and operational independence, and should provide security themselves as a primary responsibility. They should also understand that it was imperative for humanitarian actors to enter into dialogue with all relevant stakeholders. Last but not least, Member States, as donors, should provide predictable and long-term resources for the safety and security of humanitarian operations.

110. He emphasized that nothing related to humanitarian assistance posed a significant challenge to national sovereignty and territorial integrity. Humanitarian actors must not and could not challenge those fundamental building blocks of the international community. Dialogue with non-State armed groups about humanitarian access did not affect the legal or political status of those groups in any way.

111. As had been observed in the current debate, humanitarian crises and needs were changing and evolving, and the distinction between humanitarian assistance and development was in many long-standing emergencies even more artificial than before. To address chronic vulnerability, Governments and development actors must address root causes and structural issues with the same urgency they devoted to emergency humanitarian response.

112. The debate on the current agenda item had highlighted how the multiplicity of global challenges had a significant impact on the humanitarian landscape worldwide, and the day's deliberations had shown that the challenges were far beyond the capacities, capabilities and mandates of humanitarian organizations.

113. There appeared to be broad agreement about the need to focus more on capacity-building for prevention, preparedness and response at the local, national and regional levels. He was pleased to learn that increasing numbers of countries were approaching the World Bank for investments to promote prevention rather than reconstruction.

114. He was encouraged that most Member States had acknowledged the importance of efforts to strengthen the coordination of humanitarian assistance. First and foremost was the cluster approach, but it was also necessary to strengthen humanitarian leadership on the ground and improve humanitarian needs assessments, including by taking into account gender- and age-disaggregated data. Member States had also called for more investment in capacity-building and disaster preparedness.

115. He very much welcomed the support expressed by most Member States for sufficient capacity to coordinate international humanitarian assistance. In the current difficult financial climate, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and other international humanitarian actors needed all the support, including financial, that Member States could provide.

116. After briefly summarizing the issues discussed at various side events as part of the current segment, he said that many concerns had been expressed about the effects of the economic and financial crisis on humanitarian funding. On 14 July OCHA had launched the midyear review of the 2010 consolidated humanitarian appeals. Thus far in 2010 there had been 16 consolidated appeals and two flash appeals. Humanitarian funding requirements had increased by US$ 1.5 billion since the start of the year, bringing the total target for 2010 to US$ 9.5 billion. It was a strikingly positive fact that donors had thus far pledged 49 per cent of that amount.

117. However, unmet humanitarian requirements were also at their highest level ever at some US$ 4.8 billion. He appealed to Governments to maintain their generosity and continue contributing, and to ensure that the various humanitarian sectors were funded more evenly, in line with the approach of the Central Emergency Response Fund.

118. The consensus resolution just adopted by the Council reaffirmed the importance of access and humanitarian principles and acknowledged the importance of effective emergency rules and procedures, as well as common needs assessments. However, the resolution did not operationalize the themes of the current year's segment. For example, more normative guidance on operating effectively in dangerous environments would be welcome. With all the looming challenges ahead, the more that Member States "owned" a shared vision for international humanitarian assistance the better. He therefore hoped that the discussion of the year's main themes would mark a starting point for their debates and legislative efforts, not an end.

119. In conclusion, he expressed the hope that the ideas and enthusiasm generated during the segment would be translated into action for the benefit of all people in need. In the end, what counted was how many lives could be saved, not how many fine words could be uttered.

120. **The President** thanked all Member States, United Nations agencies and humanitarian organizations that had contributed to the 2010 humanitarian affairs segment. A special note of acknowledgment should go to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. The session would not have been as successful without its efforts in organizing the formal panels and coordinating the different side events. In particular, the two panels had provided a valuable opportunity to listen to experts and practitioners, with perspectives from headquarters, the field and academia, and thereby had helped the Council to be better informed on the important challenges that were increasingly impacting humanitarian assistance.

121. On behalf of the Council and on behalf of member States, observers and all other stakeholders, he warmly thanked Sir John Holmes, the Humanitarian Affairs Coordinator, for his stewardship over the past few years, his commitment to humanitarian principles, and last but not least his practical and pragmatic style.

122. In conclusion, he declared the humanitarian affairs segment closed.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.

United Nations E/2010/SR.37

Economic and Social Council

Provisional

1 October 2010

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Substantive session for 2010
General segment

Provisional summary record of the 37th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Friday, 16 July 2010, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Soborun (Vice-President) ..... (Mauritius)

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In the absence of Mr. Ali (Malaysia), Mr. Soborun (Mauritius), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.45 a.m.

Implementation of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits (*continued*)

(b) Review and coordination of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010 (A/65/80-E/2010/77)

1. **Mr. Diarra** (Special Adviser for Africa and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010 (A/65/80-E/2010/77), said that preparations were well under way for the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries. National consultations had taken place throughout 2009 with a broad spectrum of stakeholders, including Governments, Parliaments, civil society and the private sector, to produce input for regional reviews. The outcome documents for the regional review meetings for the Asia-Pacific region and the African region, both of which had been completed, stressed that the implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action remained incomplete.

2. A series of pre-conference events had been planned. The first event, organized with the United Nations Industrial Development Organization in December 2009, had examined the impact of the global financial crisis on the productive capacities and trading relations of the least developed countries. Other events would cover such key issues as: achieving a smooth transition following graduation from least-developed-country status; challenges and opportunities arising from climate change; human rights dimensions of development; and innovative methods of mobilizing financing for development. He was working with civil society, parliamentarians and the private sector to ensure broad participation in the Conference. A steering committee would manage civil society participation, while a guide to mobilizing parliamentary support had been prepared in collaboration with the Inter-Parliamentary Union. Preparations for getting the private sector involved had begun and a forum on investment would be held during the Conference. A brainstorming meeting was currently under way in New York to synthesize lessons learned from the implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action in order to improve the substantive content of the next development agenda and the methodology for monitoring content.

3. The Fourth Conference was a major undertaking of the United Nations system and the international community and required adequate resources to ensure its success. His Office had prepared a project document to mobilize international financial support and he had held consultations with donor countries, emerging donors and international organizations. However, the response had been muted, with the exception of India, Turkey and the United Nations Development Programme. He commended their generosity and urged others to expedite their plans to provide financial resources to the Trust Fund for the Least Developed Countries.

4. The report came at a time of cautious optimism for the global economy. It was encouraging that, on average, growth of the gross domestic product (GDP) of the least developed countries had reached the target of 7 per cent set by the Brussels Programme of Action. However, performance was always mixed for such a diverse group of countries. Only 11 countries had exceeded the 7 per cent target, while 12 countries had grown by less than 3 per cent. In the Asian least developed countries, GDP growth had dropped by almost two percentage points to 5.2 per cent. There had been a steep decline in GDP in the Pacific countries, driven in part by increased transport costs, lower income from tourism and the effects of the tsunami in Samoa. The earthquake that had struck Haiti in January 2010 had been devastating: at least 200,000 people had died, 300,000 had been injured, and some 2 million had been displaced. The economy had been devastated and much of the country's infrastructure had been destroyed. More than $9 billion had been pledged at the International Donors' Conference towards a New Future for Haiti. It was crucial for pledges to be delivered in full and on time; only 2 per cent of them had been disbursed to date.

5. Poverty remained endemic in the least developed countries. More than half of the population of those countries lived in poverty and suffered from hunger, while the countries themselves were lacking in productive capacity and structural transformation. In only seven least developed countries did manufacturing account for more than 15 per cent of GDP. To improve

productive capacity, the least developed countries must adopt development policies that focused on agriculture, services and industrial transformation, with an emphasis on job creation. A timely development-oriented conclusion of the Doha Round would be an important step towards improving international trade links, which could be a powerful engine for growth. Another critical step would be the full implementation of duty-free, quota-free market access by developed countries and developing countries in a position to do so, as agreed in the World Trade Organization Hong Kong Ministerial Declaration of 2007. Developed countries must also honour the pledge to eliminate all export subsidies by 2013. Clear and simple rules of origin, allowing for regional and South-South cumulation of origin, could improve the use and value of preferential trading arrangements.

6. Since 2001, only one country — Cape Verde — had graduated from the group of least developed countries. The report made three recommendations for a future development agenda. First, both implementation and monitoring of the Brussels Programme of Action had been hampered by the lack of reliable data. The least developed countries should therefore be given support for their statistical services from data collection through to dissemination. Second, investment in gender equality must be scaled up and national budgets must be gender-responsive. Third, the financial crisis had demonstrated that all countries needed the policy space to institute counter-cyclical measures in times of need. The least developed countries needed that space in a wide range of areas, including fiscal, trade and macroeconomic policies. Member States and the Organization should redouble their efforts to ensure that the Fourth Conference delivered an ambitious development agenda that had international support.

7. **Mr. Al-Aud** (Observer for Yemen), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the Group was deeply concerned about the uneven progress in achieving the targets of the Brussels Programme of Action, particularly with respect to combating poverty and hunger, achieving gender equality and reducing maternal mortality. The global financial, oil, food and climate change crises had undermined development in the least developed countries, where the number of people living in extreme poverty remained alarmingly high. Still, the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), could be achieved in those countries if their development partners met their commitments in a timely manner.

8. The Secretary-General's report (A/65/80-E/2010/77) highlighted the important role of agriculture as the largest employment sector and contributor to the economies of the least developed countries. The lack of irrigation, scientific tools and technology, seeds and fertilizer, as well as a dearth of investment, institutions and integrated farm management systems, led to low agricultural productivity, which resulted in hunger and poverty. Agricultural subsidies in developed countries created an unequal playing field for products from the least developed countries. The Group hoped to see an early conclusion of the Doha Development Round in order to establish an undistorted and equitable market that would promote rural development and contribute to world food security. It reiterated its call for enhanced productive capacity in the least developed countries, particularly in agriculture, and for greater investment in physical infrastructure and technological development.

9. The Group of 77 appreciated the work under way to prepare for the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, which should define a new generation of ambitious and comprehensive measures to establish a new partnership between the least developed countries and their development partners for the next decade.

10. **Mr. Lambert** (Belgium), speaking on behalf of the European Union; the candidate country Turkey; the stabilization and association process countries Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia; and, in addition, Norway, the Republic of Moldova, and Ukraine, said that the European Union, as the main development partner of the least developed countries, was committed to the implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action as part of its wider commitment to the global development agenda. Development aid from the Union had focused on the least developed countries for many years. Such aid had increased substantially between 2000 and 2009 to reach 0.12 per cent of gross national income (GNI), which made it feasible for the Union to reach its collective commitment to provide at least 0.15 per cent of GNI to that group of countries. The Union continuously improved aid coordination through implementation of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and insisted on the need to base any development strategy on national priorities and leadership. It had sought to restore debt sustainability, as both a donor and a

creditor under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Debt Initiative and the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative. Under the Everything but Arms Initiative, the least developed countries had duty-free and quota-free access to the European Union market for all imports except arms and ammunition. All developed countries, as well as those emerging economies and developing countries in a position to do so, should grant similar access to their markets, particularly as South-South trade now accounted for half of exports from the least developed countries. Measures were also needed to upgrade and increase productive capacity, as provided for by the Brussels Programme of Action. Lastly, the European Union had adopted principles to ensure coherence in its development policy.

11. While the efforts by the European Union and other donors had played a role in the substantial growth experienced by most of the poorest countries, the Secretary-General had also warned that the economic and financial crisis could have pernicious effects. Poverty was still a reality for most citizens of the least developed countries, and disparities between urban and rural areas and gender inequality had yet to be overcome. The special needs of countries in fragile situations must also be taken into account. Sustainable improvement would depend on making progress along a number of complementary tracks. Aid in itself would not solve all problems, but it would play a crucial role as a catalyst and, by leveraging other forms of support such as investments, trade and exchange of ideas and knowledge, could ultimately reduce dependence on aid. All actors — traditional donors, emerging donors and other stakeholders — should engage in a thorough and open debate under the leadership of their partners in the least developed countries. Each of those countries must devise its own strategy according to its national characteristics. The combination of those elements would produce synergies that could lead to long-term human and economic development.

12. **Ms. Wang** (China) said that, although the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries had promoted those countries' development over the previous decade, achieving the MDGs on schedule remained a daunting challenge and had been made even more difficult by the financial crisis. A coordinated approach involving trade, investment, assistance and capacity-building was needed to support the least developed countries' development, which was the key to their timely achievement of the MDGs. Moreover, capacity-building needed to be emphasized instead of capital injection. Developed countries must honour their commitment to allocate 0.15 to 0.2 per cent of gross national product as development aid to the least developed countries and must ensure that those funds were stable and predictable. Partnerships between the least developed countries and the international community needed to be deepened and a favourable development environment created. In formulating their economic and financial policies, major Powers should pay special attention to the needs and plight of the least developed countries so as to avoid negative spillover effects on the latter. Moreover, the size, staff and resources of the United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, needed to be increased in order to allow it to play a greater role in mobilizing and coordinating United Nations and international support for the least developed countries.

13. Greater emphasis needed to be placed on ensuring that the least developed countries enjoyed sustainable growth. Those countries' development achievements could be undermined by unexpected disasters and external shocks; the international community should therefore take a more prudent approach in assessing whether or not the least developed countries should graduate and satisfaction of the economic vulnerability index should be a necessary condition for graduation. In that regard, China supported the proposal by the Group of 77 to extend Samoa's graduation transition period to 1 January 2014.

14. From 2007 to 2009, China's imports from the least developed countries had grown by an annual average of 15.5 per cent, from 23.8 to 27.4 billion dollars and, since 2008, China had been their largest export market, taking 23 per cent of their total exports. In the first half of 2010, the Chinese Government and the Office of the High Representative had jointly organized capacity-building activities for the least developed countries and China would continue to work to help them achieve the MDGs on schedule.

15. **Mr. Acharya** (Nepal), speaking on behalf of the Group of Least Developed Countries, said that implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action, which embodied the principle of shared responsibility for the least developed countries' development, had produced mixed results: although some progress had been achieved the number of poor people was

increasing and only a small number of least developed countries had graduated from the least developed country category over the past decade. Poverty and deprivation constituted key obstacles to human development. Literacy had improved modestly but significant problems in bridging the gender gap in primary education remained.

16. Achievements in economic and social development, including those relating to the MDGs, had been reversed or were threatened by mutually exacerbating economic, food and fuel crises and the impact of climate change. The challenges posed by those crises required a stronger international support mechanism and a scaled-up global partnership to address those crises in a sustainable manner. At the current pace, the least developed countries would be unable to achieve most of the Brussels Programme of Action targets and the MDGs.

17. Official development assistance (ODA), which was insufficient to address those countries' vulnerabilities and pressing development needs, needed to be well-targeted. Moreover, a predictable, enhanced and sustainable flow of assistance was required if the least developed countries were to address their basic development needs and additional resources were required if they were to cope with climate change. Given their high degree of vulnerability, the least developed countries needed to be strongly represented and heard when resources were allocated. In addition, they required comprehensive debt relief from all creditors and measures to help them manage their debt burden in a sustainable fashion. It was crucial to ensure that recent gains made under the enhanced Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative and the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative were not eroded.

18. The least developed countries continued to face significant obstacles in accessing developed countries' markets. Promises which had been made by industrial nations to grant unrestricted market access to the least developed countries' exports as part of a World Trade Organization package were of little value unless such access covered all products. Preferential rules of origin applicable to imports from the least developed countries needed to be streamlined and implemented in a transparent manner. Agreements already reached on issues addressing the concerns of those countries, including duty-free market access and negotiations on services, should be implemented without waiting for all matters under discussion to be resolved. The international community should resist taking any further protectionist measures in response to the crisis, and such measures already in place must be strictly time-limited.

19. Aid for trade with the elements of transparency, predictability, stability and additionality was essential. Additional funding was also needed so that the least developed countries could increase their trading capacity. Foreign direct investment could play an important role in mobilizing much-needed resources for development, could complement ODA and should be equitably distributed among the least developed countries. Moreover, it should not be focused on a limited number of industries.

20. The least developed countries also needed access to technology for poverty alleviation. Lack of internationally agreed numerical targets had made it difficult to quantify implementation gaps in that area. However, the 2003 Plan of Action of the World Summit on the Information Society had announced 10 such targets to be achieved by 2015. Affordable access to essential medicines was also vital. Moreover, South-South and triangular cooperation, complemented by North-South cooperation could help those countries increase capacity.

21. The least developed countries and their development partners needed to engage in substantive preparations for the upcoming Fourth United Nations Conference on Least Developed Countries. The role of the United Nations should be to mobilize system-wide support for that Conference and ensure coherence, and in that regard efforts by the High Representative and his Office were very much appreciated.

22. **Mr. Çorman** (Turkey) said that, although many least developed countries had undertaken economic and structural reforms and achieved high growth rates since the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries in 2001, and although their development efforts had been facilitated because of ODA assistance and debt relief from development partners, in most of those countries there had been insufficient progress and multiple global crises had seriously undermined the progress already achieved. The international community required a long-term approach in order to address the specific challenges faced by the least developed countries. That would require enhanced international economic policy coordination and strengthened partnerships in the field

of development. Assisting those countries in their efforts to achieve sustainable development would also contribute to global economic growth, welfare and stability. All stakeholders should strive to ensure that the least developed countries were more resilient to external shocks, in particular through increased productive capacity.

23. ODA alone was insufficient to generate sustained growth and needed to be complemented by trade and private capital flows, including foreign direct investment and microfinance facilities. Job creation must remain a priority in development as its impact would be immediate on improvement of livelihoods and mobilization of medium and long-term resources. In addition, national ownership was crucial since the least developed countries themselves were in the best position to identify their own needs.

24. **Mr. Loulichki** (Morocco) said that the least developed countries had clearly demonstrated a real determination to improve their socio-economic indicators and had implemented successful national development strategies. However the objectives of the Brussels Programme of Action, including the MDGs, were seriously threatened by the crises that the world had faced in recent years. The least developed countries continued to suffer from crushing debts, inadequate infrastructure, weak productive capacity, low participation in international trade and vulnerability to disease and the effects of climate change. Moreover, low domestic savings rates and insufficient ODA meant that too few of their development needs were addressed.

25. Donor countries must honour their commitment to devote 0.15 to 0.20 per cent of gross national product to official development assistance for the least developed countries. Such assistance must be provided with no conditions attached and must support the policies and strategies of the countries concerned. Many of the least developed countries' economies continued to depend heavily on the export of commodities whose prices fluctuated widely on international markets, making growth more vulnerable to external shocks. Moreover, growth in those countries had not resulted in equivalent progress in poverty reduction and job creation. Diversification through expansion of the manufacturing sector and improvement of productive capacity was the best way to ensure sustainable growth. The international community should also help those countries invest in agriculture and achieve food security.

26. The efforts of the least developed countries to liberalize their trade had not brought the expected economic benefits. Despite initiatives to improve market access for their products, their share of global trade remained at around 1 per cent. Since their economies were highly dependent on agriculture, it was vital that the agricultural subsidies imposed by their trading partners in the developed world should be eliminated. The stalling of World Trade Organization negotiations and the delayed implementation of commitments in the Doha Round would inevitably impede the integration of the least developed countries into world trade and their attainment of development goals. In that connection, Morocco had established a number of partnerships with least developed countries in Africa in the fields of infrastructure, agriculture, health, education, transport and telecommunications. It had also cancelled bilateral debt with all African least developed countries and had granted them duty-free and quota-free access to its markets.

27. **Mr. Jaiswal** (India) said that in order for equitable, balanced and sustainable global growth to be achieved, the fruits of development and progress must be shared among countries. His Government had steadfastly supported efforts to strengthen the development process in the least developed countries and to make them institutionally strong and economically resilient so that they could overcome their myriad challenges. Long hampered by extreme poverty, the structural weaknesses of their economies and their lack of growth-related capacities, those countries had been pushed further down the development ladder by the current financial and other crises. They had made a great effort to achieve the goals set forth in the Brussels Programme of Action but although a number of them had increased their GDP and improved their education outcomes, those achievements had not translated into poverty reduction or economic growth.

28. In preparation for the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, to be held in Istanbul in 2011, it was time to rethink strategies of engagement with the least developed countries and to develop a more targeted, need- and situation-specific programme of action. The Conference would provide an opportunity for the international community to renew its commitment to a

global partnership with those countries, including by meeting ODA targets, and to expand the choice of tools available for that purpose. A meaningful framework for that endeavour might include promoting agricultural development and ensuring food security; strengthening productive capacities and resource mobilization and targeting aid to the production sectors; developing infrastructures; improving market access; managing climate change, sustainable development and the environment; and accelerating progress towards the MDGs.

29. Through South-South cooperation, India had been privileged to share its development experience, financial and technological resources and expertise with the least developed countries — including Nepal, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Myanmar, the Maldives and other countries of its region and beyond — in the areas of trade, increased connectivity and capacity-building. Its development partnership with Afghanistan was helping to rebuild that country and it was providing assistance to African countries through initiatives such as Techno-Economic Approach for Africa-India Movement (Team-9), the Pan-African e-network, aid for trade, scientific training and infrastructure upgrades. Since 2008, its duty-free tariff preference scheme had been extended to all the least developed countries and it had provided $250,000 in funding for the organization of the Istanbul Conference.

30. **Mr. Farias** (Brazil) said that the least developed countries' limited progress in the area of poverty reduction, highlighted in the report of the Secretary-General (E/2010/77), was of real concern. The economic crisis had taken longer to reach those countries because of their weak links to the world's financial centres, but its impact would be felt for some time. Social protection policies and measures were critical components of national and international responses to the crises faced by developing countries. The international community should provide technical and financial support for policies aimed at generating income and employment and strengthening initiatives such as school feeding programmes, cash-for-work, conditional cash transfers and risk insurance related to agricultural production and health.

31. Increased agricultural productivity must be pursued and while duty-free and quota-free access to the agricultural products of the least developed countries — measures that his Government had applied — were steps in the right direction, they would be meaningless unless non-tariff trade barriers were eliminated. It was therefore crucial to bring the Doha Round of multilateral trade negotiations to an ambitious and fair conclusion.

32. The feasibility of the adoption of countercyclical measures in the least developed countries must be assessed in the context of their limited domestic revenue, tight national budgets, high social spending requirements and external credit constraints. Fiscal and monetary prudence was therefore called for. On the other hand, those countries had shown a high average growth rate during the period preceding the financial crisis.

33. The Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries would provide an opportunity to assess South-South cooperation initiatives aimed at enhancing the national capacities of developing countries. The Conference should also consider the role of the Organization in helping Governments to emerge from risk situations and make the transition from relief to development at a time when national institutions still found it difficult to function. Measures to ensure a smooth "graduation" from least-developed-country status were also needed in order to avoid disruption in the provision of aid for national priorities. He hoped that the participants in the Conference would commit themselves to the creation of a more pro-development international system in which all policies would take into account the broader development consequences.

34. Lastly, he recognized the efforts of the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States to direct international attention to the least developed countries and to prepare for the Istanbul Conference. He welcomed the Turkish Government's willingness to host that event and pledged his country's support for the endeavour.

35. **Mr. Kim** Chang Mo (Republic of Korea) said that his Government valued the guidance provided by the report of the Secretary-General. It regarded the Istanbul Conference as an opportunity to focus efforts on key activities and revitalize support for the least developed countries, which, despite their achievements under several of the MDGs, remained far behind in many critical areas. Of particular concern was the slowness of poverty reduction, noted in the outcome

documents of the two regional meetings on implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action.

36. Because of its multiple impacts, including job creation and poverty reduction, the effort to strengthen the human capacities of the least developed countries, particularly in technological areas, was a priority. His Government had supported the E-business and Training Programme, which helped women managers and policymakers from developing countries to establish e-businesses, and Korean Internet Volunteers offered basic computer training to the general public in developing countries. The least developed countries could also benefit from trading schemes that provided duty-free, quota-free market access. His Government provided such access and was increasing its aid-for-trade and other trade-related technical cooperation measures.

37. The challenges posed by climate change and the global financial, food and energy crises could be met through investment in green growth. His Government supported efforts to promote a "green new deal for least developed countries". Both private and public financing could help to build a more resilient economy and to ensure that those countries need not choose between economic growth and protection of their natural resources.

38. Gender mainstreaming was important in the least developed countries, where women were an important factor in accelerating development. While the newly established UN Women would have an important role to play, national measures aimed at increasing women's involvement in politics would have the greatest impact.

39. **Ms. Beck** (Solomon Islands) said that like all least developed countries, the Solomon Islands faced challenges in the areas of infrastructure development, agricultural food production, deteriorating terms of trade, maternal mortality, inadequate access to water and sanitation and inability to provide affordable medicine to treat diseases such as malaria, tuberculosis and diabetes. Those problems were further exacerbated by the impact of the global food, energy and financial/economic crises and the resulting unemployment, hunger and malnutrition, poverty, inequality and high mortality rates, which severely hindered efforts to achieve the MDGs. More assistance was needed as a complement to national efforts to contain the effects of the crisis and deliver services to the rural areas where the majority of the population lived.

40. The global nature of the current crises made it necessary for development partners to meet their commitments under the Brussels Programme of Action. Technology transfer and rural infrastructure development could stimulate agricultural food production. She appealed to the least developed countries' trading partners to help them secure more favourable terms of trade, including trade preferences and elimination of trade-distorting measures, so that they could increase their share of trade and cope with the high prices of food imports. Her delegation supported the Group of 77 and China in its call to extend Samoa's transition to graduation from least-developed-country status to 2014 and called for a review of the graduation index that would take into account the seriousness of the least developed countries' vulnerability.

41. Fuel costs accounted for a third of the national budgets of least developed countries. That was particularly true of small island developing States in the Pacific, owing to their geographical isolation and dependence on fuel imports. She called on those who could provide appropriate technology and resources to assist those States in developing renewable energy.

42. The survival and livelihood of countries like her own were threatened by the impact of climate change, which included loss of arable land as a result of rising sea levels and coastal erosion, salination of water sources and loss of fishing grounds and marine biodiversity. She urged the international community and the United Nations, through the Council, to provide rapid access to resources and technology transfer in support of national adaptation and mitigation efforts.

43. Last, she called on the United Nations system and the international community to support the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, congratulated the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States on his appointment as Secretary-General for the Conference and commended his Office for its efforts to move the process forward.

Coordination, programme and other questions (*continued*)

(a) Reports of coordination bodies

(b) Proposed strategic framework for the period 2010-2013

(g) Tobacco or health

Social and human rights questions

(i) Genetic privacy and non-discrimination

44. **Mr. Bettcher** (World Health Organization), introducing the sixth report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Ad Hoc Interagency Task Force on Tobacco Control, said that the World Health Organization (WHO) Framework Convention on Tobacco Control which had entered into force in 2005, had 169 Parties and covered over 85 per cent of the world's population. It comprised a comprehensive multisectoral approach and measures to combat the tobacco epidemic. Inter alia, it contained supply and demand side measures, and provisions on scientific, technical and international cooperation. It required Parties to establish multisectoral coordinating mechanisms and to develop and implement comprehensive multisectoral national tobacco control plans, programmes and strategies. Parties reporting on the implementation of that Convention had mentioned the following problems: lack of adequate technical and financial resources; weakness or lack of national legislation and/or rules and regulations for implementation; insufficient public information and lack of public and media awareness; lack of capacities for tobacco control; interference of the tobacco industry and lack of effective taxation policies.

45. There was an established link between tobacco and poverty. The report recommended strengthening inter-agency support for integrating tobacco control and the implementation of WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control within and through the United Nations Development Assistance Framework at country level. It also recommended that the Task Force should meet to discuss strengthening the multisectoral and inter-agency response to tobacco control.

46. Data revealed that more girls were using tobacco. Furthermore, many women lived with men who smoked regularly and were thus exposed to tobacco smoke. Annually, second-hand tobacco smoke killed 600,000 persons but women were disproportionately affected and 64 per cent of the 430,000 adult deaths were women. The tobacco industry was targeting women because only about 9 per cent of women smoked compared with 40 per cent of men. Gender-specific tobacco control strategies were needed to ensure that tobacco use among young girls and women did not continue to increase. Women should participate fully at all levels of policymaking and in the implementation of tobacco control measures. Collaboration with the secretariat of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women was to be encouraged in order to increase awareness of the gender aspect of tobacco use.

47. For women, smoking increased the risk of infertility, complications during pregnancy and maternal death. In children, it increased the risk of stillbirths, neonatal death and sudden infant death syndrome, preterm birth and low birth weight. It also increased the incidence of lower respiratory infections and attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder among young children. Tobacco use was thus directly linked with MDG 4 (Reduce child mortality) and MDG 5 (Improve maternal health). The United Nations bodies working in the area of maternal and child health must collaborate to reduce the risks posed by tobacco use. Awareness needed to be raised at the country-level of the importance of tobacco-free communities and professional organizations of doctors and nurses needed to be encouraged to engage in tobacco control activities.

48. Work should also be initiated with the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues to raise awareness of the fact that tobacco use was more prevalent among indigenous populations than among the general population. Furthermore, one of the most significant challenges was to combat the tobacco industry's attempts at corporate social responsibility and its involvement as a "partner" in the "reasonable" regulation of tobacco products, involving in some cases the United Nations. The United Nations Goodwill Ambassador Programme must be re-evaluated to ensure that no tobacco industry-sponsored person represented the Organization.

49. Discarded cigarette butts contained hundreds of carcinogenic and radioactive chemicals. The secretariat of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, WHO and the United Nations Environment Programme needed to prepare a joint technical document to raise awareness of that issue.

50. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 63/8, the sale of tobacco products and indoor smoking at United Nations Headquarters had been banned. The resolution also called for such bans to be extended to all United Nations premises and, pursuant to its adoption, the Secretary-General had implemented a comprehensive strategy for smoke-free United Nations premises that informed staff, delegations and visitors of the complete smoking ban. Member States' representatives and staff members had provided very positive feedback and support for the measures taken in that regard.

51. The Council's focus on gender equality and women's empowerment was most relevant to tobacco control. Tackling the epidemic of tobacco among women was an important part of any comprehensive tobacco control strategy. The Council's resolution on tobacco and maternal and child health, the negotiations on which were facilitated by Uruguay, would raise awareness of the importance of tobacco control in reducing health risks for mothers and children.

52. **Ms. Alfsen** (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) said that three instruments adopted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) — the Universal Declaration on the Human Genome and Human Rights (1997), the International Declaration on Human Genetic Data (2003) and the Universal Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights (2005) — constituted the approved international framework in the field of bioethics, including genetics, and that the United Nations Inter-Agency Committee on Bioethics, which involved intergovernmental organizations both within and outside the Organization, was an important ad hoc mechanism.

53. In that context, and pursuant to Council decision 2008/233, UNESCO was consulting with Member States on relevant developments in the field of genetic privacy and non-discrimination and on a possible inter-agency coordination mechanism through a questionnaire that sought to determine whether States had specific legislation on the issue or addressed it through more general legislation and to identify other non-legislative mechanisms on genetic privacy and non-discrimination. Consultations with United Nations agencies and other intergovernmental organizations were also ongoing. UNESCO expected to be able to report on the outcome of those efforts in 2011.

54. **Mr. Birichevskiy** (Russian Federation) said that his delegation had studied the annual review report of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) and noted that integrating the United Nations Development Group into the CEB had facilitated more effective links between programme activities, strategic planning and working practices at the country level and had also enhanced United Nations system-wide coherence. Inter alia, the CEB was, rightly, continuing to respond to the world financial and economic crisis and its impact on development. However, Member States required more information on the progress achieved towards implementing the nine joint initiatives to address the crisis approved by the CEB in April 2009. Furthermore, the second report on the "Global Pulse" initiative, which evaluated impacts of the crisis and vulnerability, had not provided sufficient information. The CEB needed to publish, on the United Nations website, regular updates on measures taken to respond to the crisis and on progress achieved. Moreover, a feedback mechanism needed to be established with the Council in order to facilitate the implementation of anti-crisis measures, including the CEB initiative.

55. The procedures for considering CEB reports at Council sessions needed to be streamlined. The coordination segment was the most appropriate slot for consideration of the reports submitted by the CEB. It was unfortunate that there had been no opportunity to discuss that report at the current session. If agenda item 7 (a) were moved to the coordination segment, it would strengthen that segment while also streamlining the general segment agenda.

56. The delegation of Uruguay was to be commended for its preparation of the Council's draft resolution on tobacco control. That resolution rightly focused on the use of tobacco and its effects on reproductive and child health, in the context of attaining MDGs 4 and 5. It was disquieting to learn that tobacco use was rising among young girls and women, since tobacco smoke had a serious impact on maternal and child health and on child mortality. It was important to intensify efforts to control tobacco use and to integrate measures on tobacco control into national, bilateral and multilateral development cooperation programmes. His delegation supported the Secretary-General's call for a special meeting of the Ad Hoc Interagency Task Force on Tobacco Control to explore ways of facilitating

implementation of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control.

57. Issues of genetic privacy and non-discrimination, in terms of their interdisciplinary nature, were considered by the United Nations Inter-Agency Committee on Bioethics. His delegation supported the proposal of the Director-General of UNESCO to defer consideration of those issues until the Council's substantive session in 2011 and requested that she submit a report to the Council on consultations with Member States, on analysis conducted by the Inter-Agency Committee and on the exchange of opinions between United Nations bodies and NGOs.

58. **Ms. Belakhel** (Morocco) said that combating non-transmissible diseases, such as cardiovascular diseases and cancer, was a priority for the Moroccan Ministry of Health. Tobacco was targeted because it was the highest risk factor for most of those diseases. Morocco had initiated a national anti-tobacco programme in 1988 which aimed to protect non-smokers, promote non-smoking in sports, encourage smokers to stop smoking and ban the promotion of tobacco. That programme also aimed to raise awareness of the risks associated with tobacco use and promoted the promulgation of anti-smoking legislation. Moreover, the Ministry of Health had carried out studies to monitor tobacco use and risk factors for cardiovascular diseases, including a 2006 study on young people aged 13 to 15.

59. In 2009, combating tobacco use had been incorporated into the National Plan for Cancer Prevention and Control, which had been drawn up by the Ministry of Health and the Lalla Salma Association for the Fight against Cancer. That plan aimed, inter alia, to prevent tobacco use, warn smokers of the dangers of tobacco while encouraging them to stop smoking, protect non-smokers, reduce access to tobacco products, support the ratification of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, establish measures for the implementation of relevant national legislation, mobilize anti-tobacco associations and establish a multisectoral entity to monitor tobacco consumption and follow up on anti-tobacco activities.

60. Passive exposure to tobacco smoke was never without danger. An acceptable level of protection could only be provided through mandating smoke-free areas. Act No. 1591 prohibited smoking in certain public places and the advertising of tobacco. Moreover, the Ministry of Health was establishing smoke- and tobacco-free areas in hospitals, as well as in businesses, colleges and schools. In that regard, a ban affecting 31 schools in three regions had been piloted in 2007. In 2010, that ban would be extended to cover all educational institutions in Morocco.

61. Tobacco was a lucrative crop but gave rise to high socio-economic and health-related costs. Tobacco growers needed assistance in finding alternative crops. Concrete and long-term institutional support in that regard from specialized intergovernmental organizations, including, in particular, the Food and Agriculture Organization, WHO and the World Bank, was essential.

62. Although the MDGs did not focus on non-transmissible diseases, it was increasingly acknowledged that the anti-tobacco struggle was an important element in development. However, initial research by WHO indicated that anti-tobacco activities had not yet been incorporated into poverty reduction strategies at the national level. WHO would propose that anti-tobacco strategies should be included in national development programmes. Input on that matter from organizations such as the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund would be invaluable.

63. Although Morocco had taken important steps to combat tobacco use, such steps would only bear fruit if they were part of a national multisectoral strategy that incorporated the anti-tobacco struggle. In that regard, ratification of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control was a positive step which would help protect Moroccan citizens from the health, socio-economic and environmental effects of active and passive smoking. Technical and financial support was still required to ensure that anti-tobacco measures were implemented. Moreover, taxes on tobacco should be increased significantly.

64. **The President** drew attention to the annual overview report of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination for 2009/2010 (E/2010/69) and the report of the Committee for Programme and Coordination on its fiftieth session (A/65/16) and suggested that the Council should take note of those documents.

65. *It was so decided.*

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.

United Nations E/2010/SR.38

Economic and Social Council

Provisional

1 October 2010

Original: English

Substantive session of 2010
General segment

Provisional summary record of the 38th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Friday, 16 July 2010, at 3 p.m.

President: Mr. Soborun (Vice-President) ..... (Mauritius)

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* Sub-items considered together.

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In the absence of Mr. Ali (Malaysia), Mr. Soborun (Mauritius), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

Coordination, programme and other questions (*continued*)

(g) Tobacco or health (*continued*) (E/2010/L.14)

1. **Mr. Al-Aud** (Observer for Yemen), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, introduced draft resolution E/2010/L.14, on "Tobacco use and maternal and child health". Given the importance of protecting women and their children, he urged all Member States to include tobacco control in their public-health policies. The Group hoped that the draft resolution could be adopted by consensus.

(c) International cooperation in the field of informatics (E/2010/48)

Economic and environmental questions (*continued*)

(b) Science and technology for development (E/2009/92; E/2010/12-A/65/64, E/2010/31 and E/2010/68-A/65/78; E/2010/CRP.4)

2. **The President** invited the Council to begin its joint consideration of the two sub-items. He said that cyberspace had become an integral part of all human activity and was probably the most powerful tool of communication in existence, essential for coordinating efforts in such areas as water supply, education, Government services, emergency assistance, food distribution, industry and power supply. It was essential to ensure that measures were put in place to guard against potential threats that could have severe economic and social repercussions worldwide.

3. The Economic and Social Council provided an excellent forum for bringing together stakeholders to discuss policy measures that were needed to confront the increasingly transnational nature of cyberthreats and to ensure the security of critical information structures. If networks were to fail or be brought down in any country, the adverse effects would be on an unprecedented scale. For that reason, cybersecurity should be high on the international community's agenda.

4. *A briefing on "Cybersecurity: emerging threats and challenges" was provided, with presentations by Mr. Gary Fowlie (Head, International Telecommunication Union (ITU) Liaison Office in New York; Ms. Gillian Murray (Officer-in-Charge, Organized Crime Section, and Focal Point for Cybercrime, Division for Treaty Affairs, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime); and Mr. Mongi Hamdi (Head, Science, Technology and ICT Branch, Division on Technology and Logistics, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)). The panellists responded to comments made and questions raised by the delegations of Bangladesh, the Philippines, France and Canada.*

5. **Mr. Jomo** (Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development), speaking on behalf of Mr. Sha Zukang, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, introduced the report of the Secretary-General on enhanced cooperation on public policy issues pertaining to the Internet (E/2009/92), submitted in accordance with General Assembly resolution 63/202, and a note by the Secretary-General on continuation of the Internet Governance Forum (E/2010/68-A/65/78). The Secretary-General's report had been transmitted in 2009 to the Council, but the Council had decided to seek the advice of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development on the issue before considering it. The Commission had reviewed the matter of enhanced cooperation in the context of the follow-up to the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) at its thirteenth session, in May 2010. Document E/2010/CRP.4 contained an update on activities undertaken by the relevant institutions to promote enhanced cooperation in the past two years.

6. There continued to be a difference of views as to how enhanced cooperation could be achieved and in which areas. Some were of the opinion that deliberations in an international setting could best enable Governments to carry out their responsibilities in public policymaking on an equal footing. Others were of the view that dialogue among Member States, the private sector, civil society and international organizations, possibly in multiple Internet governance mechanisms, including at the regional and national levels, was an effective means of enabling Governments to fulfil their roles in relevant areas of international concern. Some also perceived management of critical Internet resources to be of primary importance, while others stressed the need for enhanced cooperation among Governments on connectivity, cybersecurity, consumer protection and a range of other issues. Critical Internet resources were

usually taken to mean the addressing systems, domain-name systems, root servers and routing tables that together handled the flow of communications traffic, where the main issues appeared to be security, continuity, stability, coordination, control and capacity, and democratic governance of the resources.

7. In its draft resolution I entitled "Assessment of the progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society" (E/2010/31, chap. I (A)), the Commission was recommending that the Council should pursue the issue by inviting the Secretary-General to convene consultations involving all Member States and all other stakeholders to work towards enhanced cooperation in order to enable Governments, on an equal footing, to carry out their responsibilities in international public-policy issues pertaining to the Internet, as called for in the 2005 Tunis Agenda for the Information Society. The Commission recommended that consultations should be held before the end of 2010, with a report on the outcome to be submitted to the General Assembly, at its sixty-sixth session, through the Council.

8. With reference to the Secretary-General's note on continuation of the Internet Governance Forum (E/2010/68-A/65/78), he noted that, in order better to understand the issues related to Internet governance and promote dialogue among stakeholders in an open and inclusive manner, Member States had decided in early 2006 to establish the Internet Governance Forum. The main function of the Forum was to discuss public-policy issues relating to key elements of Internet governance, including issues relating to critical Internet resources, the security and safety of the Internet, and developmental aspects and issues pertaining to the use of the Internet. The Forum had been given a lifespan of five years, after which Member States would review the desirability of its continuation. As requested under the Tunis Agenda, the Secretary-General had examined the merits and shortcomings of the Forum, taking into account the views of its many participants, solicited through an online questionnaire, a note verbale and a formal consultation with participants during the fourth meeting of the Forum, at Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt.

9. Given the views expressed by the General Assembly in resolution 64/187 on the question of stakeholder dialogue and the strong support for an open forum on public-policy issues related to Internet governance, the Secretary-General was recommending that the Assembly should consider extending the mandate of the Forum for a further five years, with a number of improvements, including a review of the agenda of the Forum in the light of recent technological changes such as social networks, and the development and human-rights dimensions of Internet governance.

10. Member States might also wish to consider the effectiveness of the Forum and the means by which it could better contribute to international and national public policymaking. An improved Forum should also produce outputs that promoted better understanding of issues related to Internet governance to facilitate policymaking. Similarly, Member States might wish to take note of the scope and level of participation of the various stakeholder groups in the Forum and consider whether additional steps should be taken to strengthen its inclusiveness and representativeness, particularly participation by Governments and stakeholders from developing countries. The Secretary-General was inviting the Council and the Assembly to reflect on how to improve the format and operations of the Forum, with a view to enhancing inclusiveness, transparency, effectiveness and cost-efficiency while ensuring balanced stakeholder representation and participation.

11. **Mr. Hamdi** (Head, Science, Technology and ICT Branch, Division on Technology and Logistics, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)) introduced the Secretary-General's report on progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society at the regional and international levels (E/2010/12-A/65/64). The report had been prepared by UNCTAD with input from other United Nations bodies, such as ITU, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the regional commissions.

12. The digital divide between developing and developed countries continued to narrow. Today, 90 per cent of the world's population lived within range of a cellular network, with a global mobile penetration of more than 60 per cent, or more than 4.5 billion people. The gap in access to the Internet between developed and developing countries was also closing, albeit at a slower pace, with more than half of the world's Internet users living in developing countries, especially in Asia. Regionally, Africa and the Middle East were

experiencing the fastest mobile and Internet growth. However, large disparities in terms of penetration and affordability still existed, both across and within countries and regions. In developing countries as a whole, less than 15 per cent of the population used the Internet. There were persistent challenges related to low-cost access to broadband, local-content development and data privacy.

13. The report noted that the issue of financing information and communications technology (ICT) for development remained a key area of concern, particularly with regard to the recent economic downtown and to cybersecurity. Governments needed to take the lead in adopting and harmonizing legislation in such areas as data security, network security, cybercrime, information systems and electronic transactions, as well as in fostering a culture of cybersecurity. Considerable progress had been made in 2009 towards the implementation of the World Summit outcomes.

14. A broad range of activities had been reported by United Nations entities, including the sharing of best practices, support to Governments in policy development, e-services deployment and various capacity-building efforts. Much more needed to be done, however, to create an information society for all. Major gaps remained within economies and societies, and without adequate responses from policymakers at all levels, there was a strong risk that new ICT might bring more rather than less inequality. All relevant United Nations entities must continue to join forces with Governments, the private sector and civil society to explore ways to meet the goals established at the World Summit.

15. **Mr. Blinder** (Director, Office of Information and Communications Technology) introduced the Secretary-General's report on international cooperation in the field of informatics (E/2010/48). He noted that an Ad Hoc Open-Ended Working Group on Informatics had been formed at Headquarters to act as a bridge between the evolving needs of the Member States and the innovative technologies available at the Secretariat. Under the guidance of the Working Group, strong practical results had been achieved with regard to the everyday use of ICT to assist the diplomatic community at Headquarters and other United Nations offices. Under the capital master plan, wireless Internet connectivity throughout public areas and conference rooms had been introduced. He cited two useful new portals developed by his Office, namely, Candiweb, which supported the election process for United Nations bodies by providing appropriate parties with secure access to information about elections and candidatures, and deleGATE, which sought to develop and implement cost-neutral measures to ensure that information was secure and readily accessible to Member States.

16. His Office continued to enhance the search functionalities of the United Nations Official Document System (ODS) and was assisting the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management in the development of eSubscription, which would allow Member States to subscribe to published documents through ODS. A wide range of online training courses had also been developed with the help of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) and other partners, including some in French and Spanish. Over 2,500 members of the diplomatic community had taken the course in multilateral diplomacy in 2009. His Office also provided ongoing technical support to delegates through its dedicated service desk.

17. The effectiveness of ICT depended directly on how involved the user community was in defining its needs. The Working Group had focused on practical information-technology enhancements that benefited the entire diplomatic community and could be accomplished within existing resources. His Office strongly encouraged representatives with a strong interest in ICT and with simple solutions for the delegate community to approach the Office and to participate in the work of the Working Group.

18. **Mr. Al-Aud** (Yemen), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, noted that, as a result of the Internet's explosive growth, Internet policy and governance issues were acquiring increasing importance, as highlighted by the World Summit on the Information Society, the first phase of which, held in December 2003, had adopted the Geneva Declaration of Principles and the Geneva Plan of Action. The second phase of the Summit, held in Tunis in November 2005, had adopted the Tunis Commitment and the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society. Both phases had stressed the importance of enabling developing countries to benefit from ICT by bridging both the digital and the development divides.

19. Under the Tunis Agenda, the Internet Governance Forum had been mandated, among other things, to discuss public-policy issues related to key elements of Internet governance in order to foster the sustainability, robustness, security and further development of the Internet. The Secretary-General had also been asked to examine, within five years and in formal consultation with Forum participants, the desirability of continuing the Forum and to make recommendations to the United Nations membership in that regard. The Commission on Science and Technology for Development had also recently discussed the issue of Internet governance and had submitted a draft resolution on the subject to the Council (E/2010/31, chap. I (A), draft resolution I).

20. With regard to the Secretary-General's note on the continuation of the Internet Governance Forum and his recommendations on the topic (E/2010/68-A/65/78), the Group of 77 and China was of the view that the mandate of the Forum should not be extended without reforms. It was, furthermore, not within the mandate of the Forum to consider strengthening its format, functions or operations, a task for which it lacked the required decision-making procedure. Such reforms or changes should be considered and decided by the United Nations membership. It was extremely important that the Secretary-General should initiate as soon as possible a mechanism for enhanced cooperation on Internet governance, especially among Governments, as requested by the Summit and recently by the Commission's draft resolution. The Summit had set up two pillars for Internet governance, one being the enhanced-cooperation process to enable Governments on an equal footing to carry out their roles and responsibilities in international public-policy issues pertaining to the Internet, the other being the Internet Governance Forum as a multi-stakeholder policy dialogue.

21. With regard to reforming the Forum, he noted that the Tunis Agenda had stressed the need to maximize the participation of developing countries in decisions regarding Internet governance, as well as in development and capacity-building. The issue of the continuation of the Forum was best addressed at the coming session of the General Assembly, bearing in mind the improvements highlighted by the majority of the participants during the Sharm el-Sheikh meeting in November 2009. In that respect, the Commission could start such a process through a working group to receive and review inputs from all stakeholders in order to submit a report with recommendations to the Council for consideration and submission to the General Assembly.

22. The future Forum should focus, inter alia, on how to resolve significant public-policy issues such as the unilateral control of critical Internet resources and measures to enhance access to the Internet. Effective global Internet governance required the representation and participation of stakeholders from the developing countries, especially the least developing countries, in the Forum. The Tunis Agenda should be strictly followed, so that the reformed Forum would not duplicate the work and mandate of other organizations. The General Assembly should seriously consider the possibility of incorporating financing for the Forum into the regular budget and provide assistance to developing countries for their participation in Forum meetings. The modalities of work, the preparatory process and the functions of the Forum secretariat should be changed to ensure efficiency and a balanced representation among geographical regions, with agreed terms of reference and rules of procedure. The establishment of a mechanism for enhanced cooperation together with a reformed Internet Governance Forum would effectively promote global Internet governance and facilitate the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

23. **Mr. de Bassompierre** (Belgium), speaking for the European Union; the candidate countries Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; the stabilization and association process countries and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia; and, in addition, Armenia, Georgia, Liechtenstein, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, said that the European Union welcomed draft resolution I submitted by the Commission on Science and Technology for Development to the Council. The proposals it contained were valuable for ensuring further progress in implementing the outcomes of the World Summit and were consistent with the Secretary-General's note on the continuation of the Internet Governance Forum.

24. **Mr. Al-Bayati** (Iraq) said that information and communications technology (ICT) was necessary for economic development and for building societies that protected human rights, democracy and the environment and promoted peace, economic advancement and social justice. They played an important role in achieving the United Nations

development goals and needed to be easily accessible to all people rather than be monopolized by a select few. Information technology needed to be people-centred and allow the sharing of resources. Developing countries should use ICT to assist with decision-making and should adopt policies that encouraged international e-commerce, with open software and reduced price of access to such technology.

25. Since 2003, Iraq had taken initiatives to put ICT at the service of development goals and to use it in education and e-government. Iraq had sought to educate its people about ICT and to spread Internet access throughout the country. Despite the challenges facing Iraq following the destruction of its communications infrastructure, it had made progress with help from the international community. Focus had been placed on supporting research centres and inventors through the provision of facilities, laboratories and other logistical assistance.

26. **Mr. Sergeev** (Observer for Belarus) said that his country supported greater international cooperation and partnerships in science and technology, technology transfer and the sharing of experience and innovations, with assistance from United Nations specialized agencies and developed countries. Without their experience, it was difficult to bridge the growing digital divide. He expressed support for the work of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development.

27. Belarus was working steadily to expand its information technology capacity and was progressing in the development and affordability of ICT services. The transition from analog to digital broadcasting was among the top priorities for the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). Together with ITU, Belarus had hosted the Connect CIS Summit in November 2009, where special attention had been accorded to that issue, as well as to the question of security in cyberspace. A declaration adopted by the CIS Summit aimed to further the vision and goals of the World Summit on the Information Society in the CIS region. Belarus counted on support from the United Nations, foreign donors and other stakeholders in implementing that declaration.

28. Lastly, he said that Belarus was willing to participate in consultations concerning draft resolution I submitted by the Commission.

29. **Mr. Chen** Yin (China) said that ICT played an ever-increasing role in socio-economic development and provided tools for bridging the digital divide and achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

30. With regard to Internet governance, his delegation welcomed the report of the Secretary-General on enhanced cooperation on public policy issues pertaining to the Internet (E/2009/92) and urged all parties to implement the World Summit outcomes and establish the mechanism for enhanced cooperation.

31. As to the Secretary-General's note on the continuation of the Internet Governance Forum (E/2010/68-A/65/78), his delegation did not see the need to extend the mandate of the Forum unless it was reformed appropriately. The future Forum needed to focus on resolving the issue of unilateral control of critical Internet resources, increase the representation of developing countries and make development its first priority. Forum financing needed to be incorporated into the United Nations regular budget and assistance should be provided to developing countries for participation in Forum meetings. The way the Forum secretariat operated also needed to be changed to ensure the balanced representation of all stakeholders and geographical regions.

32. The World Summit outcomes stated that the international management of the Internet should be multilateral, democratic and transparent, and authority over Internet-related public policy was the sovereign right and responsibility of every country. Noting that the Forum had been unable to solve the problem of unilateral control of critical Internet resources, he proposed that a working group should be set up at the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly to offer solutions to that problem.

33. **Mr. Kim** Chango-Mo (Republic of Korea) said that his Government had long advocated the use of ICT to promote development. Although mobile-phone access had improved, further efforts were needed to expand Internet access and broadband connectivity, two technologies that could generate sustainable livelihoods, particularly in developing countries. Closing the ICT gap was essential in order to facilitate development; allowing the gap to widen reinforced social divides and made it more difficult for vulnerable groups, including women and the poor, to escape poverty. Those groups required special attention, such as skills training for and access to ICT.

34. His delegation also recognized the need for new ways to address Internet-governance issues. The Internet Governance Forum should be strengthened to that end and its mandate should be extended to enable it to continue serving as a multi-stakeholder forum for policy dialogue on those issues. The Multi-stakeholder Advisory Group could play a valuable role in facilitating broad-based participation through the organization of the annual meeting of the Forum.

35. **Mr. Farias** (Brazil) said that, although the use of ICT had expanded considerably and although it was receiving greater consideration in public-policy formulation around the world, in order to harness the full potential of ICT in broader development efforts the United Nations had much to do before it played the pivotal role entrusted to it by the World Summit on the Information Society.

36. The United Nations should play a greater role in improving global Internet governance and in overcoming the digital divide by addressing the lack of funding to support the development of ICT. The building of an open, inclusive, diverse and reliable information society depended on the deployment of democratic intergovernmental decision-making. The United Nations was the forum of choice in that respect.

37. Adequate treatment of cyberspace as a public good should be a major objective. Policies should be discussed and implemented to enable everyone to benefit equally from the new potentialities of instant networking. Such issues as free or low-cost access to information, education and cultural goods and the promotion of cultural diversity, in line with the UNESCO Convention on Cultural Diversity, were critical if ICT was to work for development and poverty eradication.

38. His delegation had welcomed the creation of the Internet Governance Forum and had participated actively in all its meetings. As the review period approached and the Forum outcomes became more significant, it was time to reflect on its future. He welcomed the Secretary-General's recommendation that the mandate of the Forum should be renewed and given a more proactive role. The Forum secretariat should be strengthened, including with allocations from the United Nations regular budget, in order to make the Forum more effective, independent and transparent.

39. Although progress had been achieved in the Forum, issues of voice and participation of Governments and multilateral organizations in matters relating to Internet governance remained unresolved. There was a need for urgent reform of the unilateral and exclusive framework of controls over the assignment of Internet Protocol addresses, the root directory and other critical Internet resources.

40. Although the continuation of the Forum and enhanced cooperation were mutually reinforcing, they must be independent processes, as recommended by the Commission on Science and Technology for Development at its thirteenth session. All Member States should accord priority to launching the process, in accordance with the Tunis Agenda. Such cooperation was essential in order to enable Governments, on an equal footing, to carry out their responsibilities in international public-policy issues pertaining to the Internet, including cybersecurity.

41. Since the Tunis phase of the World Summit, little progress had been achieved in implementing the Global Digital Solidarity Fund or any other such mechanism capable of addressing shortfalls in official development assistance in the area of ICT. Member States should support the activities of the Fund.

42. **Mr. Rajabi** (Islamic Republic of Iran) cautioned against diluting the letter and the spirit of the outcomes of the Geneva and Tunis phases of the World Summit. Citing parts of the Tunis Agenda, he emphasized that the Internet Governance Forum and enhanced cooperation involving all stakeholders on issues related to Internet governance were two separate but complementary mechanisms and that one could not replace the other. The process towards enhanced cooperation and such cooperation itself had received short shrift thus far, notwithstanding the concerns expressed by Governments.

43. His delegation agreed with the Group of 77 and China that the question of extending the mandate of the Forum was closely related to the establishment of enhanced cooperation and that further deliberations on how to move consideration of such cooperation forward should contain clear guidance on what steps the Secretary-General should take to facilitate the process, as well as on their timing. Any decisions to be taken were the responsibility of the General Assembly and should not be left to the Forum, which had no decision-making power.

44. Although draft resolution I submitted to the Council by the Commission did not fully address his delegation's concerns, it was an adequate starting point for a text that would honour the Tunis compromise in its entirety.

45. **Ms. Sirotkina** (Russian Federation) applauded United Nations efforts to optimize and make its information systems accessible to Member States. In that connection, she noted the work of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Informatics. Her country welcomed the report of the Commission on its thirteenth session and its decision regarding the involvement of civil society, academic and business entities in its work.

46. Internet governance needed to be internationalized in order, to allow for equal participation of all States, protect each State's sovereign right to govern the Internet at the national level and ensure the safety and stability of the Internet. ITU could play a positive role in that regard.

47. **Mr. Morrill** (Canada) said that the Internet Governance Forum was an important multi-stakeholder venue for discussion of public-policy issues that pursued the goals of capacity-building and development. Canadians from all stakeholder groups had participated in the Forum and had expressed support for its continuation. The discussions at the latest session of the Commission had taken into account the full spectrum of views on the Forum and enhanced cooperation and had resulted in the balanced outcomes contained in the Commission's report. He looked forward to their adoption by the Council.

48. **Ms. Alfsen** (Observer for the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)) said that, ever since the 2003 Geneva World Summit on the Information Society, UNESCO had consistently emphasized that Internet governance must be based on the principles of openness, which encompassed freedom of expression, diversity, universality and multilingualism.

49. UNESCO, with its rich mandate covering education, the sciences, culture and communications and information, provided a humanistic sounding board for Forum activities related to freedom of expression, linguistic diversity, increased and more equitable access to information, privacy issues and media and information literacy.

50. UNESCO looked forward to continuing to play an important role in the Forum and strongly supported an extension of its mandate. In cases where the Forum had had an impact on existing and evolving governance structures, its success could be attributed to the fact that it offered a platform for international multi-stakeholders participating on an equal footing.

51. She assured the Council that UNESCO was also ready to contribute to the dialogue on enhanced cooperation at the Forum's forthcoming meeting in Vilnius.

52. **Mr. Hassan** (Egypt) said that his country supported the extension of the mandate of the Forum and believed that it needed to remain a venue for open, multi-stakeholder dialogue. The Forum needed to be part of a greater United Nations effort to build an inclusive, people-centred information-oriented society. A number of procedural aspects of the work of the Forum, including the mechanism for open consultations, financing and the reform of the secretariat, called for improvement. Substantive issues involving critical Internet resources and the participation of developing countries also needed to be addressed.

53. He expressed agreement with paragraphs 31, 32, and 35 of the Secretary-General's report (E/2010/68-A/65/78) on the work of the Forum. Egypt supported the call for establishing a working group within the Commission to address the improvement of the Forum and submit a report to the Council for transmission to the General Assembly, thereby ensuring that the process was inclusive and transparent.

54. **Ms. Nemroff** (United States of America) welcomed the report of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development and the draft resolutions and decisions it contained. The establishment of the Forum had been one of the key outputs of the World Summit. It facilitated the exchange of information and best practices among stakeholders and had become a major international venue for the discussion of Internet-related public-policy issues. The United States believed that the work methods of the Forum were fully consistent with World Summit principles and appropriately addressed its mandate as articulated in the Tunis Agenda. The United States supported the extension of the mandate of the Forum and believed that it needed to maintain a decentralized structure, using the Multi-stakeholder

Advisory Group as the principal locus for organizing its work.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.

United Nations E/2010/SR.39

Economic and Social Council

Provisional

4 October 2010

Original: English

Substantive session of 2010
General segment

Provisional summary record of the 39th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 19 July 2010, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Soborun (Vice-President) ..... (Mauritius)

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Non-governmental organizations

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In the absence of Mr. Ali (Malaysia), Mr. Soborun (Mauritius), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Coordination, programme and other questions (*continued*)

(c) International cooperation in the field of informatics (*continued*) (E/2010/48)

1. **The President** said that, due to ongoing discussions, further consideration and action under that sub-item would be deferred to a resumed session of the Council to be held later in the year.

2. *It was so decided.*

Economic and environmental questions (*continued*)

(b) Science and technology for development (*continued*) (E/2010/31)

Recommendations contained in the report of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development (E/2010/31)

Draft resolution I entitled "Assessment of the progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society"

3. *Draft resolution I was adopted.*

Draft resolution II entitled "Science and Technology for Development"

4. *Draft resolution II was adopted.*

Draft decision I: "Participation of non-governmental organizations and civil society entities in the work of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development"

5. *Draft decision I was adopted.*

Draft decision II: "Participation of academic entities in the work of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development"

6. *Draft decision II was adopted.*

Draft decision III: "Participation of business sector entities, including the private sector, in the work of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development"

7. *Draft decision III was adopted.*

Draft decision IV: "Report of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development at its thirteenth session and provisional agenda and documentation for the fourteenth session of the Commission"

8. *Draft decision IV was adopted.*

9. **The President** said he took it that the Council wished to take note of the Note by the Secretary-General on the Internet Governance Forum, contained in document A/65/78-E/2010/68.

10. *It was so decided.*

The meeting was suspended at 10.23 a.m. and resumed at 10.34 a.m.

Non-governmental organizations (E/2010/32 (Part I)* and E/2010/32 (Part II))

11. **The President** invited the Council to begin its general debate on the item.

12. **Mr. Grauls** (Belgium) speaking on behalf of the European Union; the candidate countries Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; the stabilization and association process countries Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia; and in addition, Georgia, Liechtenstein and Norway, said that the involvement of civil society and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) was an essential part of the work of the United Nations and that all stood to gain from a variety of views being expressed openly. The European Union attached great importance to the objective of resolution 1996/31 and was concerned by recent developments in the work of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations, which faced a considerable backlog, created by an increase in new and deferred applications for consultative status. It was likely that the backlog would increase further. In January, the European Union had proposed ways to reform the working methods of the Committee to address that issue and it looked forward to continuing its work with Council partners in that regard.

13. There had been more frequent deviations for the guiding principles of Council resolution 1996/31 on handling applications submitted to the Committee and the recommendations it made. States members of the Committee were increasingly opposing consultative status for organizations which had been critical of their human rights record or whose views a particular State did not agree with. The Committee had failed, during several consecutive sessions, to reach a decision on whether or not to grant consultative status to certain organizations. The European Union noted with particular concern that some Committee members had resisted granting status to organizations which promoted and defended the rights of persons based on their sexual orientation and gender identity. Such applications had been systematically delayed in the Committee through questionable procedural manoeuvres.

14. In June, the Committee had failed to fulfil its mandate when it had adopted a no-action motion on a certain organization's request for status, even though that organization had submitted its request more than three years previously and had answered 44 questions. Moreover, one Committee member had expressly requested a recommendation. Questions by Committee members should be aimed at determining whether the activities of an NGO were relevant to the work of the Council; they should not be asking organizations to provide information protected by privacy, such as names and addresses of those organizations' members, nor should their questions be used to pass judgement on the specific views expressed by an organization or prolong proceedings indefinitely.

15. The Committee's approach gave cause for concern that the guiding principles for granting Council consultative status were gradually being undermined. The European Union urged States members of the Committee to work together to defend and uphold those principles.

16. **Mr. Goledzinowski** (Australia), speaking on behalf of Canada, Australia and New Zealand (CANZ), said that every NGO which met the criteria set out in Council resolution 1996/31 should be granted consultative status. The diversity of NGO input enriched Council discussions and debates and helped ensure accountability. Effective and broad-based NGO participation was critical.

17. The Committee should take its decisions in accordance with the criteria clearly set out in resolution 1996/31. Political and ideological considerations must not be allowed to override those criteria. NGOs should all be treated in a fair, equal and transparent manner. Due process should be followed, and decisions should be taken as expeditiously as possible. Delay tactics and procedural hurdles imposed on certain NGOs were unacceptable. Additional questions or information demanded of NGOs should clearly relate to the criteria set out in resolution 1996/31. The Committee was failing to abide by those principles in its deliberations and faced a considerable backlog in its work. It should be helping to ensure NGO participation, and not be a hurdle to it.

18. It was deeply regrettable that, in 2010, the Committee had adopted a no-action motion which had deferred action on an application on which it had received responses to questions over a period of three years. That deferral not only frustrated the Committee's mandate, but had also created an unfortunate precedent for future operations of the Committee.

19. **Ms. DiCarlo** (United States of America) said that resolution 1996/31 clearly aimed to promote the engagement of NGOs with a diverse range of views and activities in the work of the Organization. Over the previous decade, however, the Committee had often failed to follow the clear guidance laid out in that resolution and the Council had often been forced to overturn Committee decisions.

20. The United States remained deeply committed to reforming the Committee and had worked hard with its members and its Chairperson from Turkey to ensure that NGOs which met the criteria of resolution 1996/31 were granted Council status in a timely fashion. However, despite recent significant improvements to its work practices, the Committee still often failed to act as an impartial arbiter. It was particularly disappointing that consultative status had not been granted to NGOs such as the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission which could make a valuable contribution to the Organization on key issues such as human rights and HIV/AIDS. In a clear contradiction of the Committee's mandate, a small group of Committee members continued to endeavour to defer indefinitely applications of otherwise qualified NGOs that they found objectionable. That practice

contradicted the mandate of the Committee and must be brought to an end.

Draft decision entitled "Application of the non-governmental organization International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission for consultative status with the Economic and Social Council" (E/2010/L.19)

21. **The President** invited the representative of the United States of America to introduce draft decision (E/2010/L.19).

22. **Ms. DiCarlo** (United States of America) introduced draft decision E/2010/L.19 and expressed the hope that the Council would grant consultative status to the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission.

23. **Mr. Gustafik** (Secretary of the Council) said that Brazil wished to join as a sponsor of the draft decision.

Recommendations contained in the report of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations (E/2010/32 (Part I))*

Draft decision I: "Applications for consultative status and requests for reclassification received from non-governmental organizations"

24. *Draft decision I was adopted.*

Draft decision II: "Withdrawal of consultative status of the non-governmental organization General Federation of Iraqi Women"

25. *Draft decision II was adopted.*

Draft decision III entitled "Suspension of consultative status of the non-governmental organization Interfaith International"

26. *Draft decision III was adopted.*

Draft decision IV entitled "Report of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations on its 2010 regular session"

27. *Draft decision IV was adopted.*

Recommendations contained in the report of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations (continued) (E/2010/32 (Part II))

Draft decision I entitled "Applications for consultative status and requests for reclassification received from non-governmental organizations"

28. *Draft decision I was adopted.*

Draft decision II entitled "Suspension of consultative status of non-governmental organizations with outstanding quadrennial reports, pursuant to Council resolution 2008/4"

29. *Draft decision II was adopted.*

Draft decision III entitled "Reinstatement of consultative status of non-governmental organizations that submitted outstanding quadrennial reports, pursuant to Council resolution 2008/4"

30. *Draft decision III was adopted.*

Draft decision IV entitled "Withdrawal of consultative status of non-governmental organizations, pursuant to Council resolution 2008/4"

31. *Draft decision IV was adopted.*

Draft decision V entitled "Suspension of consultative status of the Centre Europe-tiers monde"

32. *Draft decision V was adopted.*

Draft decision VI entitled "Modification of the agenda of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations at its 2011 session"

33. *Draft decision VI was adopted.*

Draft decision VII entitled "Dates of and provisional agenda for the 2011 session of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations"

34. *Draft decision VII was adopted.*

Draft decision VIII entitled "Report of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations on its 2010 resumed session"

35. *Draft decision VIII was adopted.*

Draft decision entitled "Application of the non-governmental organization International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission for consultative status with the Economic and Social Council" (continued) (E/2010/L.19)

36. **The President** said that the Council would now take action on the draft decision and invited the representative of the United States, the main sponsor of the draft decision, to make a statement.

37. **Ms. DiCarlo** (United States of America) said that the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission had been striving to combat discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity for over 20 years. It had promoted the implementation of United Nations treaties and had assisted NGOs in the preparation and submission of documentation to the Human Rights Council's universal periodic review, United Nations special procedures and United Nations treaty bodies. It was also a leader in the fight against HIV/AIDS and its work had been commended by the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS and the United Nations Development Programme. The International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission had fully met all requirements set out in Council resolution 1996/31 which stipulated the principles to be applied in the establishment of consultative relations with NGOs.

38. Some delegations disingenuously claimed that they had called for a no-action motion during the May session of the Committee on purely procedural grounds. However, the Committee had refused to grant consultative status to any NGO concerned with lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender issues for more than a decade. In that same period, the Council had granted consultative status to seven such NGOs whose applications had been rejected by the Committee, establishing the principle that a non-governmental organization's support for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender rights should not be a disqualifying factor in the Committee's consultative status decisions. The Committee continued to ignore the standards set out in resolution 1996/31 and the guidance it had received from its parent body.

39. When it had become obvious that the application of the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission would remain deferred indefinitely, the United States had requested the Committee to reach a decision. However, rather than allow a vote that would in all likelihood be reversed by the Council, the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations had carried a no-action motion and argued that the United States had no standing to make that request since the application of the NGO was still pending.

40. As a legal matter, that argument was deeply flawed, since, under resolution 1996/31, the Council clearly had the authority to approve decisions such as E/2010/L.19. Committee members must not be allowed to keep controversial NGO applications in an endless state of deferral by refusing to allow votes that could be reviewed by the Council. That would sharply curtail the Council's legitimate and necessary oversight authority over a subsidiary body which had been established for the purpose of promoting — not thwarting — the engagement of civil society with the United Nations. Council members might not always agree with the views of some 3,000 NGOs that currently enjoyed consultative status but, collectively, they played a vital role in the work of the Organization. The United States urged the Council to be guided by the standards for consultative status under resolution 1996/31 and adopt E/2010/L.19.

41. **Mr. Gustafik** (Secretary of the Council) said that the draft decision had no programme budget implications.

42. **Mr. AlNafisee** (Saudi Arabia) requested a vote on the draft decision.

43. **The President** asked if any delegation wished to make a general statement before the vote.

44. **Mr. AlNafisee** (Saudi Arabia), recalling that the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations had carried a no-action motion on a request to take action on the application for consultative status of the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission (IGLHRC), said that the motion should have been respected. Regrettably, a few Council members had politicized the issue and challenged a majority vote. His delegation strongly objected to moving the issue from the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations to the Council, since that undermined the Committee's authority. He would therefore be voting against the draft decision and called on other members of the Council to do the same, in order to reaffirm their trust in the Committee and the established system for considering applications for consultative status.

45. **Mr. St. Aimee** (Saint Lucia) said that his delegation took the recommendations of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations very seriously; [illegible] decision on just one of those cases was a way of reducing the backlog. Furthermore, his delegation considered that other NGOs dealt with higher-priority matters, especially in the current economic and financial crisis; it was therefore important to consider all the applications for consultative status, rather than selecting just one of them. Lastly, he expressed some concern at the name of the NGO in question, since it suggested that the organization was a human rights commission that might seek to redefine human rights.

46. **Mr. Carmon** (Observer for Israel) said that, as a member of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations, his delegation recognized the important role played by that body in strengthening and furthering the relationship between the United Nations and civil society. Recalling that it was the Committee's duty, and indeed its role, to engage in candid and meaningful consideration of all applications by NGOs for consultative status, and to grant consultative status to those NGOs that complied with the principles set out in Council resolution 1996/31, his delegation was concerned at recent developments during the 2010 resumed session of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations and, in particular, the procedural attempt to further derail substantive discussion over IGLHRC, which had been the subject of continuous discussion for over three years and had engaged constructively with the Committee throughout that process. His delegation had carefully reviewed the application and had found IGLHRC to be an organization that fully complied with the relevant criteria for granting consultative status to NGOs and greatly contributed to the goals and work of the United Nations. To date, no convincing reason had been offered to explain why consideration of its application had been constantly deferred. Israel therefore joined other delegations in supporting draft decision E/2010/L.19.

47. **The President** asked if any delegation wished to make a statement in explanation of vote before the voting.

48. **Mr. Abdelaziz** (Egypt) said that the Council was facing a difficult challenge, since it was being asked to decide whether to grant consultative status to just one [illegible] particularly since it had in fact only been before the Committee for three sessions, not for three years as some had claimed.

49. Since the Committee had taken a decision to retain the application of IGLHRC under consideration, and had not issued any recommendation for the Council to act upon, the adoption of the draft decision, which should not have been submitted to the Council, would create a precedent that would only serve to upset the delicate balance of the institutional structure of the United Nations and could be used to delegitimize the Committee and other United Nations subsidiary bodies. The Council should instead respect the competence and efficiency demonstrated by the Committee to date.

50. Egypt believed in the importance of promoting constructive dialogue with NGOs and civil society, based on tolerance and mutual respect, including respect of religious freedoms and the right to freedom of expression; it had championed several initiatives to promote respect of those rights. In light of the relevant articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, as well as the Committee's mandate to ensure compliance with the principles laid down in Council resolution 1996/31, his delegation had serious concerns about the continuous manoeuvres of IGLHRC to avoid addressing directly questions on religious rights and the right to freedom of expression and opinion. It had hoped to continue its dialogue with the NGO in order to alleviate those legitimate concerns, since it believed in the right of all delegations to receive answers to their questions, within a democratic society.

51. His delegation was committed to upholding the legitimacy of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations and to respecting and valuing the institutional structure of the United Nations, as well as the legitimate concerns of Committee members regarding applications under consideration. The manner in which the issue was being addressed was regrettable since, rather than giving equal treatment and rights to all NGOs with applications pending

consideration by the Committee, an attempt had been made to grant special privileges to one specific organization, without any substantive consideration of its documentation, which was not currently before the Council. Egypt would therefore vote against the draft decision.

52. **Mr. Grauls** (Belgium), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that the Union supported the application of IGLHRC for consultative status with the Council. It firmly believed that each NGO should be assessed in accordance with the principles to be applied in the establishment of consultative relations, as laid down in Council resolution 1996/31, which also explicitly confirmed the need to take into account the full diversity of NGOs. In its application and responses to subsequent questions in the Committee, IGLHRC had clearly demonstrated that it fulfilled the principles set out in resolution 1996/31.

53. Although many of the more than 3,000 organizations that had been granted consultative status to date represented views or policies not endorsed by the European Union, that did not mean that they should be denied the opportunity to make their views known at the United Nations. The European Union believed that there was no valid reason for refusing to grant consultative status to IGLHRC; such a decision would constitute outright discrimination. IGLHRC represented an important constituency that had the same rights as any others to engage in the work of the United Nations. It would, moreover, add an important voice to the Organization's discussions to the benefit of all. The European Union would show its respect for the values of diversity, non-discrimination and respect for others on which the United Nations was founded by voting in favour of the draft decision; it strongly encouraged all members of the Council to do the same.

54. **Mr. Tollefsen** (Norway) said that the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations had a clear mandate from the Council, as laid down in resolution 1996/31, to make recommendations on the granting of consultative status to NGOs. Member States expected that the principles laid down in that resolution should be implemented in such a way as to afford equal treatment to all applicants, since non-discrimination was a founding value of the United Nations as well as a self-evident principle of justice.

55. His delegation was gravely concerned at the long-running trend for well-founded applications from a certain group of NGOs not to receive expeditious consideration, but rather to be deferred while Committee members posed questions that had already been answered by the applicant or were not related to the criteria set out in Council resolution 1996/31. That was the case for IGLHRC, which had, in an open and transparent manner, consistently answered all questions posed by the Committee since its application was first considered in May 2008. The no-action motion carried by the Committee at its 2010 resumed session on the request to take action on the organization's application highlighted the Committee's inability to apply its own mandate consistently.

56. No information had been brought to light that should dissuade the Council from granting IGLHRC consultative status; in fact its determined efforts to secure consultative status demonstrated that it held the Council in high regard and was precisely the kind of organization that could help the United Nations achieve its objectives. His delegation would therefore vote in favour of draft decision E/2010/L.19 and urged all Council members to do the same.

57. **Mr. Parham** (United Kingdom) said his delegation firmly believed that every NGO meeting the criteria set out in Council resolution 1996/31 deserved to be granted consultative status with the Council, regardless of the nature of the organization. In fact, that resolution explicitly confirmed the need to take into account the full diversity of NGOs. IGLHRC met all the criteria for the establishment of consultative relations set out in resolution 1996/31; it was well known internationally as well as in the United States; and much of its work supported United Nations activities in such fields as health, gender and human rights. His delegation was convinced that IGLHRC would add an important voice to Member States' discussions at the United Nations and represented an important constituency with the same and equal right as all others to engage in the Organization's work.

58. To date, over 3,000 NGOs had been granted consultative status based on the principles contained in Council resolution 1996/31. Although many of them undoubtedly espoused views or policies that were not necessarily shared by all Governments, they had the right to make their views known at the United Nations. The United Kingdom had always supported those NGOs that, in its opinion, met the criteria for the establishment of consultative relations, regardless of whether it shared all their specific views.

59. IGLHRC had provided full, frank and satisfactory responses to all the questions and requests for information posed by members of the Committee and had always engaged constructively and respectfully with delegations. No credible reason could therefore be presented for refusing it consultative status, except that of straightforward discrimination. His delegation would vote in support of the application of IGLHRC for consultative status and encouraged all Council members to do likewise.

60. **Mr. Morrill** (Canada) said that his delegation recognized the need for diverse NGO voices in the discussion and work of the United Nations. IGLHRC, which was active in the area of human rights advocacy and had contributed to research on HIV/AIDS, fulfilled all the criteria set out in Council resolution 1996/31 for the establishment of consultative relations. Canada would therefore vote in favour of draft decision E/2010/L.19.

61. **Mr. Goledzinowski** (Australia) said that he would like to respond to the point raised by the representative of Saint Lucia about whether IGLHRC was a human rights body that might have an interest in redefining human rights.

62. **Mr. Abdelaziz** (Egypt), speaking on a point of order, said that delegations were not permitted to make general statements at the current stage of proceedings and should therefore limit themselves to making statements in explanation of vote before the voting.

63. **The President** asked the representative of Australia to limit his statement to an explanation of vote.

64. **Mr. Goledzinowski** (Australia) said that his delegation's understanding of IGLHRC, which had also been reflected in the discussions on the issue within the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations, was that the organization worked to promote the rights of gay and lesbian people on the basis that they had the same rights as anyone else. That was also the basis on which IGLHRC worked with the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS and other agencies.

65. Secondly, according to the established procedure for granting applications by NGOs for consultative status, the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations made recommendations, which were then subject to confirmation by the Council. The fact that the Committee had decided not to make any recommendation in the current case could not frustrate the Council's mandate. If the Committee's decisions were considered to be binding on the Council, that would have major implications since it would also apply to the decisions of other subsidiary bodies of the Council as well. His delegation had received no instructions from its capital to curtail the Council's sovereignty and therefore, as an elected member of the Council, it had the right to consider the draft decision. For the reasons given, his delegation would vote in favour of draft decision E/2010/L.19.

66. **Ms. Melon** (Argentina) said that her delegation would vote in favour of draft decision E/2010/L.19, on an exceptional basis, as warranted by the circumstances. While it would have preferred to receive a recommendation from the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations, and trusted that that procedure would continue to be followed in future, it believed that the Council should take a decision in the current case, since the Committee had not been able to formulate a recommendation some three years after the application had been submitted. The consideration of a substantive issue, such as the application of an NGO for consultative status, should be discussed on its merits rather than postponed solely on the basis of procedural mechanisms, especially when the NGO met the requirements established in Council resolution 1996/31 for the establishment of consultative relations.

67. **Mr. St. Aimee** (Saint Lucia) said that when an NGO had consultative status with the Council, it enjoyed a certain level of authority and legitimacy in terms of its work and its mandate. As his delegation was not a member of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations, he did not know what the mandate of IGLHRC was, particularly since its name indicated that it was a human rights commission, rather than an association or body. He therefore did not at present have enough information to reach a decision on how to vote.

68. **Mr. Lukiyantsev** (Russian Federation) said that, while his delegation opposed discrimination on any grounds, including that of sexual orientation, it believed that draft decision E/2010/L.19 had major repercussions for the procedures established by the Council itself with regard to the functioning of the Council and its subsidiary bodies. Previously, when the Council had considered reports of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations, it had either confirmed or reviewed the recommendations contained

therein; in the current case, however, the Committee had not finished its consideration of the NGO in question and had not made any recommendation regarding its application for consultative status. His delegation was therefore deeply concerned at the very negative precedent created by the Council's consideration of draft decision E/2010/L.19, bearing in mind that the matter was still on the Committee's agenda. Since, according to the Secretariat, over 530 NGO applications were currently under consideration by the Committee, it was hard to imagine what would happen if the Council were to consider all of them. Furthermore, the current procedure did not meet the goal of enhancing United Nations system-wide coherence, as enshrined in the recently adopted General Assembly resolution 64/289. For all those reasons, his delegation could not support the proposal and would vote against draft decision E/2010/L.19.

69. *A recorded vote was taken.*

In favour:

Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Guatemala, Italy, Japan, Liechtenstein, Malta, Norway, Peru, Poland, Republic of Korea, Slovakia, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay.

Against:

Bangladesh, China, Comoros, Egypt, Malaysia, Morocco, Namibia, Niger, Pakistan, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Zambia.

Abstaining:

Bahamas, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, India, Mauritius, Mongolia, Mozambique, Philippines, Republic of Moldova, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Turkey, Ukraine.

70. *The draft decision was adopted by 23 votes to 13, with 13 abstentions.*

71. **Ms. Méndez Romero** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela), said that equality of all persons before the law and the prohibition of discrimination as to sexual orientation or economic and social status were enshrined in the Constitution of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. However, her delegation had voted against the draft decision because only the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations was responsible for examining applications for consultative status; the members of the Council did not have enough information to make decisions on those applications and must respect the report and recommendations of the Committee.

72. Council decisions on the granting of consultative status to any NGO would establish a negative precedent, undermining the work of its subsidiary bodies and opening the door to selective and politicized examination by the Council of applications advancing the national interests of the States that drew attention to them.

73. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela supported the work of IGLHRC and hoped that the Committee would promptly examine the other applications before it.

74. **Mr. Álvarez** (Uruguay) said that his delegation had voted in favour of the draft decision because IGLHRC had answered all the questions posed by the members of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations, which must assess all NGOs on their own merits, notwithstanding the opinion States might have of their fields of endeavour, and free of discrimination because they dealt with issues related to sexual orientation or gender identity, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and other international human rights instruments.

75. The application for consultative status had been submitted in accordance with the principles established by Council resolution 1996/31.

76. Uruguay had always rejected no-action motions on principle: no body of the United Nations should delay or evade consideration of a matter. His delegation did not consider that the Council's action constituted a precedent that could be used henceforth by a parent body to undermine its subsidiary.

77. **Mr. St. Aimee** (Saint Lucia) said that his delegation did not believe that IGLHRC met the criteria set forth for consultative status with the Council. The name of the NGO indicated that it had no role to play in the Council. The Council did not have before it the information necessary for his delegation to participate in the process.

78. **Ms. Xu Jing** (China) said that China was against all forms of discrimination, but that her delegation had voted against the draft decision because the Council had bypassed the Committee on Non-Governmental

Organizations, setting a negative precedent. Only the Committee should take decisions on the granting of consultative status with the Council; the Committee's credibility and authority had now been harmed and the relations between the Council and NGOs had been challenged.

79. **Mr. Rodríguez** (Peru) said that his delegation supported the independence of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations and the granting of consultative status to NGOs that fulfilled the corresponding requirements. As a member of the Committee, Peru consistently favoured granting status to NGOs that both met the requirements under resolution 1996/31 and fully answered Committee members' questions.

80. The draft decision had represented a unique situation: despite IGLHRC having met the criteria for consultative status, the Committee had not made its recommendation, after three years, thereby undermining its own work. His delegation had voted in favour of the draft decision only because IGLHRC met the requirements, and believed that no precedent was being set.

81. The procedures of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations must be respected; they must not be used to impede its functioning. Peru hoped that a vote by the Council would not be viewed as an attempt to take over the work of the Committee, but rather as an incentive for it to achieve greater efficiency.

82. **Ms. Fujimoto** (Japan) said that it was unfortunate that the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations had moved to take no action on the application for consultative status of IGLHRC. Irrespective of its views on the NGO in question, Japan believed that the decision on granting consultative status should be based on the criteria set out in Council resolution 1996/31. While it felt that the Committee should have sufficient time to consider applications, it was concerned when decisions were repeatedly deferred. IGLHRC had responded to the questions put to it and, therefore, Japan had voted in favour of the decision.

83. **The President** asked whether any delegation wished to make a general statement.

84. **Ms. DiCarlo** (United States of America) said that the United States thanked the members who had voted in favour of the draft decision. The Council had sent a clear message to the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations and the international community that it would ensure that diverse voices of civil society, including those that advocated for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender rights, were heard at the United Nations.

85. The Council had strengthened the implementation of its resolution 1996/31 and had reaffirmed that NGOs that met the corresponding requirements would be granted consultative status. The Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations should follow the Council's guidance in its forthcoming decisions.

The meeting rose at 12.25 p.m.